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THE

HISTORY

OF THE

ENGLISH STAGE.

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INCLUDING THE

LIVES, CHARACTERS AND AMOURS

OF THE MOST EMINENT

ACTORS AND ACTRESSES.

WITH

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING;

WHEREIN

THE ACTION AND UTTERANCE OF THE BAR, STAGE AND PULPIT ARE DISTINCTLY CONSIDERED.

BY THOMAS BETTERTON.

80-9

REVISED, WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES, BY CHARLES L. COLES.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Drama did not so much as grow into any form in England, till the reign of Henry VIII. It met, indeed, with some kind of establishment in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; but flourished in that of King James I. Arts were cultivated, till the beginning of our intestine broils in the reign of King Charles I. when the Dramatic Muse was banished, and all the arts degraded.

The design of this Work is to give a faithful account of the Stage and its progress; and to convey the names of some of our most eminent players, to a little longer date, than nature has given their bodies.

But, before we descend to particulars, let us, with a noble Peer, take a general view of that period when monarchy was restored; under which administration the Drama was raised to its highest degree of perfection.

"I behold (says Lord Lansdown) a King, with a guilty nation at his feet, raising his enemies from the ground, taking them by the hand as if they had never offended—Sour hypocritical zeal and grimace turned, as by enchantment, all at once into

good humour and open-hearted cheerfulness—Majesty and splendour in the court, decency and discipline in the church, dignity and condescension in the nobility, plenty and hospitality in the country, opulence in the city, good nature and good manners amongst all ranks and conditions of men; trade flourishing, navigation extended, manufactures improved, arts and sciences encouraged, wit abounding, the Muses restored, the gown respected; and above all, liberty, *real* liberty secured to perpetuity, by that great bulwark the Habeas Corpus Act. This is the scene which then presented itself, and I look back with pleasure upon it."*

The stage having always been accounted a most rational and instructive entertainment, has therefore met with all proper encouragement in the wisest governments, and been supported by the wisest men. The English Theatre has risen for a series of many years under the patronage of Princes, and appeared in greater lustre than any other; and, what seems still more extraordinary, is, that some of the most eminent writers in the Dramatic way, have been themselves players; of which Shakespeare and Otway are immortal instances.

I believe, no nation in the world can boast of having produced so many excellent writers for the Stage, nor so many inimitable performers as our

* See Lord Lansdown's letter to the author of Remarks, &c. 1732. 4to. page 20.

own. The memory of Mr. Betterton, Mr. Booth, Mr. Wilks, Miss Barry, Miss Bracegirdle, and Miss Oldfield's performances are still fresh among us; and as their merit rendered them universally admired, their loss is now as universally lamented.

But, here it ought to be observed, that as wit, good sense, and politeness were absolutely necessary to support the character and dignity of the scene, it was always thought proper to entrust the management of the Theatre, to persons who were supposed to be justly qualified to judge of all performances fit to be introduced in that place; that works of genius might meet with suitable encouragement, and dullness and immorality be effectually excluded.

Mr. Betterton long had the Stage under his direction; and he, undoubtedly, wanted no abilities to *distinguish* merit; nor have I ever heard that he wanted inclination to *reward* it. And as eminent as he was allowed to be, yet he thought it adviseable, and no way unworthy of him, to join with those who were professed players. And of late years Mr. Booth, Mr. Wilks, and Mr. Cibber, as they were all eminent in their professions as actors; their own interest, as well as the honor of the Stage, made them industrious to support it in full credit. The two former of these patentees are dead; and so is that envy which pursued them in their lives. We have now no memory for their failings, and only retain the pleasing remembrance of their various excellences.

From these general observations then, we may perceive, that it hath been always thought essential to the preservation of the Stage, and the encouragement of authors, to have the management of the Theatre committed to proper persons, who had given some public proof of their capacity to judge, what would be most instructive or agreeable to the taste of an English audience; as will, in the course of this undertaking, be fully shown.

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

ENGLISH STAGE.

CHAP. I.

Of the Duke of York's Company, under Sir William D'Avenant, 1662*; and the union between the King's and Duke's Company,* 1682.

WE shall begin these Memoirs of players, with an account of our English Rocius, Mr. Thomas Betterton, whom we may suppose in his own particular person, on a foot with that illustrious Roman; especially when we consider that Mr. Betterton was excellent both in Tragedy and Comedy; whereas, by all we can discover, Roscius was famous for Comedy only.

As to his descent, he was the son of Mr. Thomas Betterton, born in Tothill Street, Westminster, in the year 1637. He had a very good education, and when he was come to years sufficient, by his own choice, his father put him to Mr. Rhodes, a Bookseller at Charing Cross; Mr. Edward Kynaston was fellow-apprentice with him.

I must not here pass by Mr. Betterton's loyalty and courage; who, though but a mere stripling, went a volunteer into the King's service, as Mr. Hart, Mr. Smith and Mr. Mohun had done before him. They were all four engaged at the battle of Edge-Hill, in Warwickshire; and Mr. Mohun so remarkably signalized himself in this engagement, that the Major, who commanded our young Cavaliers, being shot, his commission was given to him.

After the murder of the King, these gentlemen all became players; but what more immediately brought Mr. Betterton and Mr. Kynaston upon the Stage, was their master's having, formerly, been Wardrobe-keeper to the King's company of Comedians in Black-Friars. And upon the march of General Monck and his army, from Scotland to London, in the year 1659, Mr. Rhodes obtained from the powers then in being, a licence to set up a company of players in the Cockpit in Drury Lane, and soon made it complete; his two apprentices, Betterton for men's parts, and Kynaston for women's, being the head of them.

Mr. Betterton, though now but twenty-two years of age, acquired very great applause by his performances in *The Loyal Subject*, *The Wild Goose Chase*, *The Spanish Curate*, and several other plays of Beaumont and Fletcher. But while our young actor was thus rising, under his master Rhodes, Sir William D'Avenant procured a patent of King Charles II. for erecting a company under the title of *The Duke of York's Servants*, and took Mr. Betterton, and all who acted under Mr. Rhodes, into his company; and in the year 1662, opened a Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, with the first and second parts of *The Siege of Rhodes*, having new scenes, and decorations of the Stage, which were then first used in England.

Although this be affirmed by some, others have laid it to the charge of Mr. Betterton, as a crime, that he was the first innovator on our rude Stage; and that such innovations were the destruction of good playing; but I think with very little show of reason, and very little knowledge of the Stages of Athens and Rome, where, I am apt to believe, was, in their flourishing times, as great actors, as ever played here, before curtains. For how that which helps the representation, by assisting the pleasing delusion of the mind in regard of the place, should spoil the acting, I cannot imagine.

The Athenian Stage was so much adorned, that the very ornaments or decorations cost the State more money, than their wars against the Persians and the Romans; though their Dramatic Poets

were much inferior to the Greeks, (if we may guess at those who are perished, by those who remain) were yet not behind them, in the magnificence of the Theatre to heighten the pleasure of the representation. If this was Mr. Betterton's thought, it was very just; since the audience must be often puzzled to find the place and situation of the scene, which gives great light to the play, and helps to deceive us agreeably, while they saw nothing before them but some linsey-wolsey curtains, or at best, some piece of old tapestry filled with aukward figures, such as were disagreeable to the audience. This therefore I must urge as his praise. Mr. Betterton endeavoured to complete that representation which before was but imperfect.

At what time his Grace the Right Honourable George Villiers, Duke of Rockingham, began to write his *Rehearsal*, we cannot exactly learn; but thus much may be certainly gathered from the plays satarized in it, that it was before the end of the year 1663, and it is demonstrable that it was finished before the year 1664, because it had been several times rehearsed, the players were perfect in their parts, and all things were in readiness for its acting before the great plague in 1665, which prevented its being played. What was then intended, being very different from what now appears. In that the Poet was called Bilboa, by which name Sir Robert Howard was the person pointed at. During this interval many plays were brought upon the Stage, written in heroic rhyme; and on the death of Sir Wil-

liam D'Avenant, in 1668, whom Mr. Dryden succeeded as Poet Laureat, it became still in greater vogue. This moved the Duke to change the name of the hero from Bilboa to Bays, directly levelling his bolt at Mr. Dryden. It was brought upon the Stage in 1671, acted with universal applause, and is the justest and truest satire upon a vitiated and Dramatic taste, the world ever saw; as it will be an everlasting proof of the author's wit and judgment.

Mr. Betterton, now making, among the men, the foremost figure in Sir William D'Avenant's company, he cast his eyes on Miss Saunderson, who was no less eminent among the women, and married her. She was bred in the house of the patentee, improved herself daily in her profession, and having, by nature, all the accomplishments required to make a perfect actress, she added to them the distinguishing characteristic of a virtuous life.

But notwithstanding the industry of the patentee and managers, it seems the King's house then carried the vogue of the town, and the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre being not so commodious, the players and other adventurers built a much more magnificent one in Dorset Gardens, Fleet Street, and adorned it with all the machines and decorations the skill of those times could afford. This likewise proving less effectual than they hoped, other arts were employed, and the political maxim of Divide and Impera, (Divide and Govern) being put in practice, the feuds and animosities of the King's company were so well improved as to produce an union between

the two patents. To bring this design about, the following agreement was executed, viz.

Memorandum, October 14, 1681.

It is hereby agreed upon, between Dr. Charles D'Avenant, Thomas Betterton, Gent. and William Smith, Gent. of the one part, and Charles Hart, Gent. and Edward Kynaston, Gent. on the other part. That, the said Charles D'Avenant, Thomas Betterton, and William Smith, do pay, or cause to be paid, out of the profits of acting, unto Charles Hart and Edward Kynaston, five shillings a-piece for every day there shall be any Tragedies or Comedies, or other representations acted at the Duke's Theatre in Salisbury Court; or wherever the company shall act during the respective lives of the said Charles Hart and Edward Kynaston, excepting the days the young men or young women play for their own profit only; but this agreement to cease, if the said Charles Hart or Edward Kynaston shall at any time play among or assist the King's company of actors; and for as long as this is paid, they both covenant and promise not to play at the King's Theatre.

If Mr. Kynaston shall hereafter be free to act at the Duke's Theatre, this agreement with him, as to his pension, shall also cease.

In consideration of this pension, Mr. Hart and Mr. Kynaston do promise to make over, within a month after the sealing of this, unto Charles D'Avenant, Thomas Betterton and William Smith, all the

right, title and claim which they or either of them may have to any plays, books, cloaths, and scenes in the King's Playhouse.

Mr. Hart and Mr. Kynaston do also both promise, within a month after the sealing hereof, to make over to the said Charles D'Avenant, Thomas Betterton and William Smith, all the title which they, or each of them, have to six shillings a-piece for every day there shall be any playing at the King's Theatre.

Mr. Hart and Mr. Kynaston do both also promise to promote with all their power and interest, an agreement between both playhouses; and Mr. Kynaston for himself, promises to endeavour, as much as he can, to get free, that he may act at the Duke's playhouse, but he is not obliged to play unless he have ten shillings per day allowed, for his acting, and his pension then to cease.

Mr. Hart and Mr. Kynaston promise to go to law with Mr. Killigrew to have these articles performed, and are to be at the expence of the suit.

In witness of this agreement, all the parties have hereunto set their hands, this 14th day of Oct. 1681.

CHARLES D'AVENANT,
THOMAS BETTERTON,
WILLIAM SMITH,
CHARLES HART,
EDWARD KYNASTON.

This private agreement hath been reflected on as tricking and unfair, but then it is by those, who

have not sufficiently considered the matter; for, *an dolus, an virtus, quis in hoste requirit?* All stratagems are allowed between enemies; the two houses were at war; conduct and action were to decide the victory; and whatever the Duke's company might fall short of in action, it is plain they won the field by their conduct. For Mr. Hart and Mr. Kynaston performed their promises so well, that the union was effected the very next winter, 1682.

We must now leave these gentlemen for some time, in the useful province of their profession, both to instruct and divert the public, (which was the original institution of Dramatic Poesie) to give an account of Miss Barry. Some particular Memoirs, relating to her, we have been favoured with by a gentlewoman, her most intimate friend, which is the subject of our next chapter.

CHAP. II.

MEMOIRS OF MISS BARRY, &c.

Elizabeth Barry was the daughter of Robert Barry, Esq. Barrister at Law; a gentleman of an ancient family, and good estate.

At the beginning of the civil wars, when king Charles invited all his loyal subjects to take up arms in his defence, Mr. Barry raised a Regiment for his Majesty's service, composed of his neighbours and tenants, equipping and maintaining them a considerable time at his own expense. This, as it ever after, made him known by the title of Colonel

Barry, it also so far incumbered his estate, as to oblige his children when grown up, to make their own fortunes in the world.

The Lady D'Avenant, who had been several years a widow, and a particular friend of Sir William D'Avenant, having the greatest friendship for Col. Barry, took his daughter, when young, and gave her a good education. Lady D'Avenant made her not only her companion, but carried her whereever she visited. Miss Barry by frequently conversing with ladies of the first rank and best sense, became soon mistress of that behaviour which sets off the well-bred gentlewoman.

What first recommended Miss Barry to the stage, was her voice; her good air, though no beauty, made Sir William take her; but as she had a very bad ear, they found it so difficult to teach her, that they thought it would be impossible to make her fit for the meanest part. Three times she was rejected; and three times, by the interest of her lady, they were prevailed on again to try her, but with so little success, that several persons of wit and quality being at the play, and observing how ill she performed, positively gave their opinion she never would be capable of any part of acting. But the Earl of Rochester, to show them he had a judgment superior, entered into a wager, that by proper instructions, in less than six months, he would engage she should be the finest player on the Stage. He was opposed by them all, and though they knew him to be a person of excellent sense, yet they

thought, on this subject, he had started beyond the bounds of his judgment; and so many poignant things were said to him on this occasion, that they piqued him into a resolution of taking such pains with Miss Barry, as to convince them he was not mistaken.

From the moment he had this dispute, he became intimately acquainted with her, but to the world he kept it private, especially from those he had argued with about her. He soon, by talking with her, found her mistress of exquisite charms; and it was thought that he never loved any person so sincerely as he did Miss Barry. Whoever has a mind to see him in the form of a lover, may find him shine in the letters annexed to his Poems (bound up with the Tragedy of *Valentinian*) Miss Barry being the person to whom they were addressed.

The first parts Lord Rochester chose to teach Miss Barry, were the Little Gipsey, in the comedy of the *Rover*, by Miss Behn; and Isabella, the Hungarian Queen, in the tragedy of *Mustapha*, by the Earl of Orrery; which (besides the private instructions he gave her) he made her rehearse near thirty times on the stage, and about twelve in the dress she was to act it in. He took such extraordinary pains with her, as not to omit the least look or motion, nay, I have been assured from those who were present, that her Page was taught to manage her train, in such a manner, so as to give each movement a peculiar grace.

But before I mention what success the Peer had with his Pupil, to give the reader a clearer idea, it was certain Miss Barry was mistress of very good understanding, yet she having little, or no ear for music, which caused her to be thought dull when she was taught by the actors, because she could not readily catch the manner of their sounding words, but run into a tone, the fault of most young players; this defect my Lord perceiving, he made her enter into the nature of each sentiment; perfectly changing herself, as it were, into the person, not merely by the proper stress or sounding of the voice, but feeling really, and being in the humor, the person she represented, was supposed to be in.

As no age ever produced a person better skilled in the various passions and foibles of mankind than my Lord Rochester, so none was more capable of instructing her to give those heightening strokes which surprised and delighted all who saw her.

The first night she played the Hungarian Queen, my Lord brought the King, and the Duke and Duchess to the play, besides the persons he had disputed withal about her. The very air she appeared with, in that distressed character, moved them with pity, preparing the mind to greater expectations, but when she spoke these words to the insulting Cardinal,

My Lord, my sorrow seeks not your relief;
You are not fit to judge a mother's grief:
You have no child for an untimely grave,
Nor can you lose what I desire to save.

Here, Majesty distressed by the hostile foe, the widow Queen forlorn, insulted by her subjects, feeling all an afflicted mother could suffer by a stern counsellor's forcing her to yield her only son to be sacrificed to the enemy to save themselves and city, these passions were so finely expressed by her, that the whole theatre resounded with applauses; the Duchess of York was so pleased, that from Miss Barry she learned to improve in the English language, made her a present of her wedding suit, and favoured her in so particular a manner, not only whilst Duchess, but when Queen, it is said, she gave her her coronation robes to act Queen Elizabeth, in the Earl of Essex. In this part, though the play is but indifferently wrote, and filled with bombast, yet Miss Barry so happily hit it, she made that Queen, which was so much beloved, revive again, and become idolized in her: that little speech of

"What means my giving subjects?"

was spoken with such a grace and Emphasis, as was never before, or since, to be imitated; her performance giving the audience an idea of that princess in many important passages of her life. The air with which she looked when she penetrated into the thoughts of the Countesses of Rutland and Nottingham (on their endeavouring to hide the different passions of *hate* and *love*) shewed, more than the language, the piercing genius of that great Lady; but when Cecil is recounting the seizure of the Earls, and mourns Es-

sex's fallen state, no imagination can form, that has seen her look, and air, when she says

> Essex thou art fallen indeed!
> See! the crocodile weeps over his prey.

As those who are acquainted with history know, that Queen Elizabeth notwithstanding her indulgence to her favorites, had a quick penetration into their faults; so, it is certain, at the same time her eyes flowed with pity, for the follies and mismanagements which drew on their fates. The sword still executed justice on the traitors. This Miss Barry represented so finely, that love, disdain, hate, severity and pity, were so blended together in this politic Queen, one could not say which had the mastery, and gave that age greater lights into Queen Elizabeth's temper than history itself.

Alexander the Great; or the *Rival Queens,* was a play in which Miss Barry by her admirable acting seemed to have new formed the character; to read the play one would think the poet had been in a rage the whole time he was writing it, yet there are some strokes in it which have the true fire of poetry. The players, when this tragedy first appeared, made it a favorite one to the world, but for the want of a Barry and a Bracegirdle, the characters of Roxana and Statira are perfect burlesque on the dignity of Majesty, and good manners. Roxana is haughty, malicious, insinuating; with this compound, she is made desperately in love with Alexander. On her first

entering, what misery did she seem to feel, tortured with jealousy, when she says,

> Madness but meanly represents my toil.
> Roxana and Statira! they are names
> That must for ever jar; eternal discord,
> Fury, revenge, disdain, and indignation,
> Tear my swoln breast, make way for fire and tempest;
> My brain is burst, debate and reason quench'd,
> The storm is up, and my hot bleeding heart,
> Splits with the rack.

I have heard this speech spoken in a rage that run the actor out of breath; but Miss Barry when she talked of her *hot bleeding heart*, seemed to feel a fever within, which by *debate* and *reason* she would *quench*. This was not done in a ranting air, but as if she were struggling with her passions, and trying to get the mastery of them; a peculiar *smile* she had, which made her look the most genteelly malicious person that can be imagined; when she meets Statira, and insults her in these words:

> I hope your majesty will give me leave
> To wait you to the grove, where you would grieve.
> Where like the turtle, you the loss will moan
> Of that dear mate, and murmur all alone.

Then with what a softness did she look and speak when she takes Alexander by the hand, saying,

> ———now——for a last look,
> And that the memory of Roxana's wrongs
> May be for ever printed in your mind.

In the following scene Roxana's character rises; no rage, no revenge, nor even the fear of Sysigambis, who by her policies was suspected to aim at her, and the infant's destruction with which she was with child, could make her admit a thought against Alexander's life, nay, the indignation she is in with Casander for tempting her, joined with his proffered love, is so great, that heightened at it, he is forced as in astonishment, to soothe her rage, and to contrive the getting Statira into her power. Once at the acting the last scene of this play, Miss Barry wounded Miss Boutel (who first played the part of Statira) the occasion of which I shall here recite.

Miss Boutel was likewise a very considerable actress; she was low of stature, had very agreeable features, a good complexion, but a childish look. Her voice was weak, though very mellow; she generally acted the young innocent lady whom all the heroes are mad in love with; she was a favourite of the town; and, besides what she saved by playing, the generosity of some happy lovers enabled her to quit the stage before she grew old.

It happened these two persons before they appeared to the audience, unfortunately had some dispute about a *veil* which Miss Boutel by the partiality of the property-man obtained; this offending the haughty Roxana, they had warm disputes behind the scenes, which spirited the Rivals with such a natural resentment to each other, they were so violent in performing their parts, and acted with such vivacity, that

Statira on hearing the King was nigh, *begs the Gods to help her for that moment;* on which Roxana hastening the designed blow, struck with such force, that though the point of the dagger was blunted, it made way through Miss Boutel's stays, and entered about a quarter of an inch in the flesh.

This accident made a great bustle in the house, and alarmed the town; many different stories were told; some affirmed, Miss Barry was jealous of Miss Boutel and Lord Rochester, which made them suppose she did it with design to destroy her; but by all that could be discovered on the strictest examination of both parties, it was only the *veil* these two ladies contended for and Miss Barry being warmed with anger, in her part, she struck the dagger with less caution, than at other times.

Though I have mentioned several passages of this play in which Miss Barry shined, I cannot conclude without taking notice that though before our eyes we had just seen Roxana with such malice, murder an innocent person, because better beloved than herself; yet, after Statira is dead, and Roxana is following Alexander on her knees, Miss Barry made this complaint in so pathetic a manner, as drew tears from the greatest part of the audience.

O! speak not such harsh words, my royal master:
But take, dear sir, O! take me into grace;
By the dear babe, the burden of my womb,
That weighs me down when I would follow faster.
My knees are weary, and my force is spent;

O! do not frown, but clear that angry brow;
Your eyes will blast me, and your words are bolts
That strike me dead: the little wretch I bear,
Leaps frighted at your wrath, and dies within me.

Here end the memoirs communicated to us concerning Miss Barry. But to the same hand we are obliged for the following account of that celebrated actress, Miss Marshall.

Dr. D'Avenant's company falling under Mr. Betterton's direction, as to the women, he employed himself in visiting, and overlooking their actions as a guardian, or father, and several ladies so far busied themselves as often to enter into quarrels with nephews, sons and husbands, about attempting to corrupt them. The private behaviour of these young women were frequently talked of by the ladies, extolling their virtuous resistance of those dangerous seducers, man, to the clouds; and comparing fallen nymphs, with the fiends sinking to the shades below.

Mrs. Betterton, encouraged by the public, joined with her own good inclinations, trod the stage without the least reproach; but the first thing that gave a damp to these endeavours, and caused her to find the guarding these ladies virtues a task more laborious, and difficult, than any Hercules had imposed on him by his step-dame, was what happened to the famous Miss Marshall, more known by the name of Roxalana, from her acting that part. This lady possessed a mind which shone with a haughty and severe virtue according to the haughtiness of that

age. She was attacked by, and had withstood the Earl of Oxford* in every form an artful gallant could put on. Grown mad with love, and her repulses, he forms a plot to get her by force; intending to seize her as she went from the house after she had been acting this part; which being made known to her, by some real friend, she obtained a party of the King's Guards to protect her. When her Chair appeared, the Nobleman began his assault, but was valiantly repulsed, and she was safely conducted home.

This adventure was the whole talk of the court and town; the ladies applauded her resolution secretly, not a little pleased to see their sex's resolute behaviour in Roxalana. Many parties were formed both for and against her. The fanatics cried out, saying it was a shame they should bring up girls in the school of Venus, teaching them such airs and tricks to tempt mankind. The gentry liked the diversion, alledging, the greater the temptation, the greater the glory to resist, saying that ladies were bred up in virtuous sentiments, their minds improved by high ideas, and encouraged by the patronage of the good and great.

However, in this affair, the King himself having the story represented to him in the blackest light, interposed; and his Majesty, with a freedom natural to one of the best tempered Princes, told the Earl he thought the vice (though perhaps he gave too much countenance to it by his own irregularity) bad enough

* Aubrey De Vere.

with the consent of the *Fair*, but where force or violence was used, it was so heinous, he would not, though a sovereign, indulge the thought of such an action, much more permit it to be done by a subject.

This reproof caused the Earl to answer with some reserve, he said he would think no more of her; but soon after he renewed his assault, telling her it was impossible to live without her. That, her exalted virtue had inspired him with other sentiments, proposing to marry her in private. This bait Roxalana greedily swallowed, her vanity inclining her to believe the Earl sincere. In short, the Earl comes, brings his coachman dressed like a minister, marries her, and took her down to one of his country seats, where soon growing weary of her, he pulled off the mask, and, with scorn, bid her return to the stage. Upon this, she threw herself at the king's feet, who countenanced her so far, that he made the Earl allow her 500*l.* a year; and as long as her son lived would not suffer him to marry any other lady; but on the child's death, the concern for so ancient a family's becoming extinct (the Earl being the last of it) his Majesty through great intercession was prevailed on, to permit of the Earl's re-marriage.

We are, in this place, obliged, in justice to her merit, to introduce a lady now living, Miss Anne Bracegirdle. She was the daughter of Justinian Bracegirdle of Northamptonshire, Esq. where she was born.

It is not any matter of our inquiry by what means

a gentlewoman of so good an extraction came upon the stage, since the best families have been liable to the greatest misfortunes, amongst which was that of her father, in being bound, and suffering for others. But it may be some kind of alleviation to say, that in the scene, wherein Providence had consigned her fate, she had the good fortune to be well placed, when an infant, under the care of Mr. Betterton and his wife, whose tenderness she always acknowledges to have been paternal; nature formed her for the stage, and it was to the admiration of all spectators that she performed the Page in *The Orphan*, at the Duke's Theatre in Dorset Garden, before she was six years old.

Here we must leave her for the present, and return to Mr. Betterton. For, with him, we must observe that the disregard for the *Tragic* poem, is at all times chiefly to be attributed to a defect in the *action*, when represented on the stage.

Nor is there any greater proof of the virtue or corruption of the people, than their pleasures. Thus in the time of the vigour of the Roman virtue, Tragedy was very much esteemed, its dignity kept up, and the decorum of the stage so very nicely observed, that a *Player's standing out of his order, or speaking a false quantity, was sufficient for him to be hissed off the stage.* This Cicero assures us, *Histrio si paulo movit extra Numerum, aut si Versus pronunciatus est Syllaba una brevior aut longior exsibilatur & exploditur.* Paradox iii.

And when they give us the most noble examples of virtue in their real life, they were most pleased with the representation of noble examples on the stage; for people are delighted with what bears the greatest likeness to the turn and temperament of their own minds. Thus when the Roman virtue decayed, or indeed was lost with their liberty, and they subsisted and spread their dominions more by the merit of their ancestors, and the Roman name made terrible by them, than by their own bravery, then effeminacy and folly spread through the people, which immediately appeared in their sports or spectacles; and Tragedy was slighted.

Now Farce on the one hand, with its Mimes and Pantomimes, and Opera on the other, with its emasculating sounds, invade and vanquish the stage, and draw the ears and eyes of the people, who care only to laugh, or to see things extravagant and monstrous.

I rather at present attribute the decay of Tragedy to our want of Tragedians, and indeed Tragic Poets, than to the corruption of the people; which, though great enough, yet is not so desolate, as what we have mentioned in the Roman State.

I have often heard Mr. Betterton say, that when he first played under Sir William D'Avenant, the company was much better regulated, and they were obliged to make their study their business, which our young actors do not think it their duty now to do; for they scarce ever mind a word of their parts but only at Rehearsals, and come thither too often scarce

recovered from their last night's debauch; when the mind is not very capable of meditating so calmly and judiciously on what they have to study, as to enter thoroughly into the nature of the part, or to consider the variation of the voice, looks and gestures which should give them their true beauty, many of them thinking that making a noise renders them agreeable to the audience, because a few of the upper gallery clap the loud efforts of their lungs, in which their understanding has no share. They think it a superfluous trouble to study real excellence, which might rob them of what they fancy more, midnight, or indeed whole night's debauches, and a lazy remissness in their business.

Another obstacle to the improvement of our young players, is that when they have not been admitted above a month or two into the company, though their education and former business were ever so foreign to *acting*, they vainly imagine themselves masters of an *art*, which perfectly to attain, requires a studious application of a man's whole life. They take it therefore amiss to have the poet give them any instruction; and though they hardly know any thing of the art of poetry, will pass their censure, and neglect or mind a part as *they* think the author and his part deserves. Though in this they are led by fancy as blind as ignorance can make it; and so wandering without any certain rule of judgment, generally favour the bad, and slight the good. Whereas, said he, it has always been mine and Miss Barry's prac-

tice to consult even the most indifferent poet in any part we have thought fit to accept of; and I may say it of her, she has often so exerted herself in an indifferent part, that her acting has given success in such Plays, as to read, would turn a man's stomach; and though I could never pretend to do so much service that way, as she has done, yet I have never been wanting in my endeavours. But while young actors will think themselves masters before they understand any one point of their art, and not give themselves leisure and time to study the *Graces* of Action and Utterance, it is impossible that the stage should flourish and advance in perfection.

Every one must be sensible of the justness of these sentiments, but some are apt to believe many of them proceed from want of judgment in the Managers, in admitting people unqualified by nature, and not providing such persons to direct them, as understand the art they should be improved in. All other arts people are taught by masters skilful in them, but here ignorance teaches itself, or rather confirms itself into the confidence of knowledge, by going on without any rebuke.

From these observations, and the instilling of them, into all under his care, were owing that just action which appeared on the stage under Mr. Betterton's conduct.

We shall next give the sentiments of a rigid critic upon the action of that period; "Mr. Hart, (says Mr. "Rymer) always pleases, and, what he delivers, ev-"ery one takes upon consent; their eyes are pre-

"possessed and charmed by his action, before aught "of the poet's can approach their ears; and to the "most wretched of characters he gives a lustre and "brilliance, which dazzles the sight, that the deform- "ities in the poetry cannot be perceived.*

"Both our Æsopus and Roscius (in *The Maid's "Tragedy*) are on the stage together; Mr. Hart and "Mr. Mohun are wanting in nothing. To these we "owe for what is pleasing in every scene wherein "they appear.†

We shall now proceed to some brief notices, communicated to us by Mr. Boman, of himself and contemporaries.

CHAP. III.

Some Account of Mr. Boman, Mr. Nokes, Mr. Smith, Mr. Harris, Mr. Lee, Mr. Mountfort, Miss Guyn, &c.

JOHN BOMAN, son of John Boman, of King Street, Westminster, was born at Pillerton in Warwickshire, in the same house, chamber and bed wherein his mother was born, on the 27th of December, St. John's day, 1664.

He was brought into the Duke's Theatre to sing at seven years old.

* See his Letter to Sir Fleetwood Shepard, 1677, 8vo. p. 5 & 6.

† *Ibid.* 138, and 193.

Mr. Boman married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Francis Watson, Bart. She was born in the parish of St. Martin, in the Fields, 1677, and was a very pretty player both in her person and performances; particularly remarkable, for acting the part of Eurydice in *Oedipus*.

That famous Comedian, Mr. James Nokes, was a toyman in Cornhill. From his labours on the stage, he acquired and left to a nephew at his death, an estate of 400*l*. *per annum*, at Totteridge near Barnet.

Upon his commencing player, King Charles the second first discovered his excellences as he was acting the Duke of Norfolk, in Shakespeare's Henry VIII.

Mr. Dryden wrote *Gomez* in the Spanish Fryar, in compliment to Mr. Nokes.

Mr. Smith was a barrister at law of the society of Gray's Inn.

Mr. Harris was bred a seal-cutter, and he made Mr. Joseph Williams a player.

Mr. Anthony Lee was of a good family, and born in Northamptonshire.

Mr. William Mountfort was a gentleman descended of a very good family. The first particular notice taken of him on the Stage, was in acting the part of Tall-Boy; soon after which his salary was advanced, and he became more famous in playing Sir Courtly Nice.

He was taken off the stage, and made one of the gentlemen to Lord Chancellor Jefferies, "who at an "entertainment of the Lord Mayor and court of Al-

"derman in the year 1685, called for Mr. Mountfort "to divert the company (as his Lordship was pleas- "ed to term it) he being an excellent mimic, my Lord "made him plead before him in a feigned cause, in "which he aped all the great Lawyers of the age in "their tone of voice, and in their action and gesture "of body, to the very great ridicule not only of the "lawyers, but of the law itself; which to me (says "the historian) did not seem altogether prudent in a "man of his lofty station in the law; diverting it cer- "tainly was; but prudent, in the Lord high Chan- "cellor, I shall never think it.*

We must leave Mr. Mountfort, for some time, performing his duty in the service of Lord Chancellor Jefferies, and proceed to others his cotemporaries, among whom was Mr. George Powel, an excellent tragedian. With him may be mentioned that memorable comedian Mr. Cave Underhill, with many more who will be mentioned in the course of these memoirs.

But this chapter shall be concluded with a few remarks, made by Mr. Addison, relating to a very peculiar player.†

"Mr. William Peer was an actor at the restoration, and took his theatrical degree with Betterton, Kynaston and Harris. Though his station was humble, he performed it well; and the common compari-

* See Sir John Reresby's Memoirs from the Restoration to the Revolution. Octavo, p. 230.

† See Guardian, No. 82.

son with the stage and human life which has been so often made, may well be brought out on this occasion. *It is no matter*, say the moralists, *whether you act a* Prince, *or a* Beggar, *the business is to do your part well.*" Mr. Peer distinguished himself particularly in two characters, which *no man* ever could touch but himself; one of them was the speaker of the Prologue to the play, which is contrived in the tragedy of *Hamlet*, to awake the conscience of the guilty King. Mr. Peer spoke this prologue with such an air as represented him an actor, and with such an inferior manner as only acting an actor, as made the others on the stage appear *real* great persons, and not representatives. This was a nicety in acting, that none but the most *subtile player* could so much as conceive. I remember his speaking these words, in which there is no great matter but in the right adjustment of the air of the speaker, with universal applause.

> For *us*, and for our *Tragedy*,
> Here stooping to *your clemency*,
> We beg your *hearing* patiently.

Hamlet says very archly upon the pronouncing of it, "Is this a *prologue* or a *poesie* of a ring?" However the speaking of it got Mr. Peer more reputation, than those who speak the length of a puritan's sermon every night will ever attain to. Besides this, he got great fame on another little occasion. He played the apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet;* it will be necessary to recite more out of the play than Peer spoke, to have a right conception of what he did in it.

Romeo, weary of life, recollects means to be rid of it after this manner:

I do remember an apothecary
That dwelt about this rendezvous of death;
Meagre and very rueful were his looks,
Sharp misery had worn him to the bones.

When this Spectre of poverty appeared, Romeo addresses him thus:

I see thou art very poor.
Thou may'st do any thing, here's fifty drachms,
Get me a draught of what will soonest free
A wretch from all his cares.

When the apothecary objects that it is unlawful, Romeo urges;

Art thou so base and full of wretchedness,
Yet fear'st to die? Famine is in thy cheeks,
Need and oppression stareth in thy eyes,
Contempt and beggary hang on thy back;
The world is not thy friend, nor the world's laws.
Then be not poor, but break it, and take this.

Without these quotations the reader could not have a just idea of the visage and manner which Peer assumed, when in the most lamentable tone imaginable; and delivering the poison, like a man reduced to the drinking it *himself*, if he did not vend it, says to Romeo,

My poverty, but not my will, consents.
Take this and drink it off, the work is done.

It was an odd excellence, and a very particular

circumstance, this of Peer's, that his whole action of life depended upon speaking *five* lines better than any man else.

We shall farther proceed to shew, from Mr. Betterton's papers, what the *duty* of a player is.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Duty of a Player.

FROM his very name we may derive his *duty*, he is called an *actor*, and his excellence consistst in *acting* and *speaking*. The *Mimes* and *Pantomimes* did all by gesture, and the action of hands, legs and feet, without making use of the tongue in uttering any sentiments or sounds; so that they were something like our *Dumb Shows*, with this difference, one Pantomime expressed several persons, and that to the tunes of musical instruments. The dumb shows made use of several persons to express the design of the play as a silent action. The nature of this is best seen in *Hamlet*, before the entrance of his players.

[*Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly, the Queen embracing him; she kneels, and makes shew of protestation unto him; he takes her up, and reclines his head on her neck. Lays him down on a bed of flowers; she seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison into the King's ear, and exit.*

The Queen returns, finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The poisoner, with two or three mutes, comes in again, seems to lament with her; the dead body is carried away. The poisoner courts the Queen with gifts; she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.]

I only repeat this, to shew the manner of the old time, and what they meant by dumb shows, which Shakespeare himself condemns in this very play, when Hamlet says to the players, "O! it offends me to the soul, to see a robustuous perriwig pated fellow, tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the *groundlings*, who (for the most part) are capable of nothing, but *inexplicable* dumb shows and noise."

But the Pantomimes or Roman dancers, expressed all this in one person, as we have it in Mr. Mayne's *Lucian;* where Demetrius the Cynic Philosopher railing against *dancing*, is invited by one of them in the time of Nero, to see him perform, without either pipe or flute, and did so; "for having imposed silence on the Instruments, he by himself, danced the adultery of Mars and Venus, the Sun betraying them, and Vulcan plotting, and catching them in a wire-net; then every god, who was severally spectator; then Venus blushing, and Mars beseeching; in a word, he acted the whole fable so well, that Demetrius much pleased with the spectacle, as the greatest praise that could be bestowed upon him, cried out in

a loud voice, I *hear* my friends what you *act;* nor do I only *see* them, but methinks you *speak* with your hands.

This instance not only shews the difference between these pantomimes from our old dumb shows; but the power of *action,* which a player ought to study with his utmost application. The orator at the bar, and in the pulpit, ought to understand the art of speaking perfectly well; but *action* can never be in its perfection but on the stage, and in our time the pulpit and the bar have left off even that graceful action, which was necessary to the business of those places, and gave a just weight and grace to the words they uttered. I wonder that our clergy do not a little more consider this point, and reflect, that they speak to the people as much as the orators of Greece and Rome; and what influence action had on them, will be evident from some instances we shall give in their proper places.

Action indeed has a natural excellence in it, superior to all other qualities; action is motion, and motion is the support of nature, which without it would again sink into the sluggish mass of chaos. Motion in the various and regular dances of the planets surprises and delights. Life is motion, and when that ceases, the human body so beautiful, nay, so divine when enlivened by motion, becomes a dead and putrid corse, from which all turn their eyes. The eye is caught by any thing in motion, but passes over the sluggish and motionless things as not the pleasing object of its view.

This natural power of motion or action is the reason, that the attention of the audience is fixed by any irregular, or even fantastic action, on the stage, of the most indifferent player; and supine and drowsy when the best actor speaks without the addition of action.

It was the skill the ancient players of Athens and Rome had in this, which made them not only so much admired by the great men of those times and places, but raised them to the reputation of being masters of two of the greatest orators that Athens or Rome ever saw; and who, had it not been for the instructions of the actors Satyrus, Roscius, and Æsopus, had never been able to convey their admirable parts to the world.

Demosthenes being, after many successful attempts, one time exploded the assembly, went home with his head muffled up in his cloke, very much affected with the disgrace; in this condition Satyrus the actor followed him, being his intimate acquaintance, and fell into discourse with him. Demosthenes having bemoaned himself to him, told his misfortune, that having been the most industrious of the pleaders, and having spent almost the whole strength and vigour of his body in that employment, yet could he not render himself acceptable to the people; that drunkards, sots and illiterate fellows, found so favourable a hearing, as to possess the pulpit, while he himself was despised. What you say (replied Satyrus) is very true, but I will soon remove the cause of all this, if

you will repeat some verses to me out of Sophocles, or Euripides. When Demosthenes had pronounced after his way, Satyrus presently repeated the same verses with their proper tone, mien and gesture, gave such a turn to them, that Demosthenes himself perceived they had quite another appearance. By which being convinced how much grace and ornament accrues to speech by a proper and due action, he began to think it of little consequence for a man to exercise himself in declaiming, if he neglected the just pronunciation or decency of speaking. Upon this he built himself a place under ground (which remained in the time of Plutarch) whither he retired every day to form his action, and exercise his voice. To shew what pains this great man took, as an example to our young actors, who do not think themselves obliged to take any at all, I shall proceed with Plutarch. In his house he had a great looking-glass, before which he would stand, and repeat his orations; by that means observing how far his action and gesture were graceful or unbecoming.

The same Demosthenes, when a client came to him on an assault and battery, he at large gave him an account of what blows he had received from his adversary, but in so calm and unconcerned a manner, that Demosthenes said, "surely, my good friend, thou hast not suffered any one thing of what thou makest thy complaint:" upon which his client warmed, cried aloud——"How, Demosthenes? Have I suffered nothing?" "Ay marry," replies he, "now

I hear the voice of a man, who has been injured and beaten." Of so great consequence did he think the tone and action of the speaker towards the gaining belief.

This was the case of Demosthenes, as Plutarch assures us, and that of Cicero was not much different —At first (says Plutarch) he was, as well as Demosthenes, very defective in action, and therefore he diligently applied himself to Roscius the Comedian, sometimes, and sometimes to Æsopus the Tragedian. And such afterwards was the action of Cicero, that it did not a little contribute to make his eloquence persuasive; deriding the rhetoricians of his time, for delivering their orations with so much noise and bawling, saying that it was their want of ability to speak, which made them have recourse to bellowing.

The same might be said to many of our bawling actors, of which number Æsopus was not, yet so possessed with his part, that he took his acting to be so real, and not a representation, that whilst he was on the stage representing Atreus deliberating on the revenge of Thyestes, he was so transported beyond himself, that he smote one of the servants hastily crossing the stage, and laid him dead on the place.

Lord Bacon, in his Advancement of Learning, gives us a history from the annals of Tacitus, of one Vibulenus, formerly an actor on the stage, but at that time a common soldier in the Pannonian garrisons; which is a wonderful instance of the power of action, and what force it adds to the words. The account is as follows:

Vibulenus, on the death of Augustus Cesar, had raised a mutiny, so that Blesus the Lieutenant committed some of the mutineers to prison; but the soldiers violently broke open the prison gates, and set their comrades at liberty; and this Vibulenus, in a tribunitial speech to the soldiers, begins in this manner—"You have given life and light to these poor innocent wretches—but who restores my brother to me, or life to my brother? Who was sent hither with a message from the legions of Germany to treat of the common cause; and this very last night has he murdered him by some of his gladiators, some of his bravoes, whom he keeps about him to be the murderers of the soldiers. Answer, Blesus, where hast thou thrown his body; the most mortal enemies deny not burial to the dead enemy. When to his corpse I have performed my last duties in kisses, and flowing tears, command me to be slain at his side, so that these our fellow soldiers, may have leave to bury us."

He put the army into such a ferment and fury, by this speech, that if it had not immediately been made appear, there was no such matter, and that he never had any brother, the soldiers would hardly have spared the Lieutenant's life; for he acted as if it had been some interlude on the stage.

There is not so great a pathos in the words uttered by the soldier, as to stir the army into so very great a ferment, they must therefore receive almost their whole force from a most moving and pathetic action, in which his eyes, hands and voice, joined in a most

lively expression of his misery and of his loss. It is true, that when an army is tumultuous in itself, it is no difficult matter to run them into madness; but then it must be done by some, who either by their former interest there, had purchased an opinion among them, or some one who by the artfulness of his address, should touch their souls, and so engage them to what he pleases. The latter I take to be our case in Vibulenus, who by the advantage of his skill in action, recommended himself and his supposititious cause so effectually to them, as to make the General run a great hazard of his life for an imaginary murder.

This has made some of the old orators give the sole power in speech to action, as I have read in some of those learned men who have treated of this subject in English and French. And I am persuaded that the clergy would move their hearers far more, if they added but graceful action, to loud speaking. This often sets off indifferent matter, and makes a man of little skill in any other part of oratory, pass for the most eloquent; this, I have read, was the case of Trachallus, who though none of the best orators of his time for the composition and writing part, yet excelled all the pleaders of that age, his appearance and delivery was so plausible and pleasing. The stateliness of his person and port, the sparkling of his eyes, the majesty of his looks, the beauty of his mien, and his voice, added to these qualities, which not only for gravity and composedness came up to that of a Tragedian, but even excelled any ac-

tors that ever yet trod the stage, as Quintilian assures us. Philustus, on the other hand, for want of these advantages of utterance, lost all the beauty and force of his pleadings, though for language and the art of composition he excelled all the Greeks of his time.

The same advantage had Pericles and Hortensius, with this difference, Hortensius ascribed all the success of his pleadings to the merit of the writing, and convinced the world of his error by publishing his orations; Pericles, though it is said he had the Goddess persuasion on his lips, and that he thundered and lightened in an assembly, and made all Greece tremble when he spoke, yet would never publish any of his orations, because their excellency lay in the action.

What I have said here of action in general, and the particular examples I have given, is I believe sufficient to satisfy any one that is studious of excellence on the stage, that it ought to be his chief aim and application. But next to this is the art of speaking, in which also a player ought to be perfectly skilled; for, as an eminent writer observes, "The ope-"ration of speech is strong, not only for the reason or "wit therein contained, but by its sound. For in all "good speech there is a sort of music, with respect "to its measure, time and tune. Every well meas-"ured sentence is proportional three ways, in all its "parts to the sentences, and to what it is intended to "express, and all words that have time allowed to "their syllables, as is suitable to the letters whereof "they consist, and to the order in which they stand

"in a sentence. Nor are words without their tune "or notes even in common talk, which together com- "pose that tune, which is proper to every sentence, "and may be pricked down as well as any musical "tune; only in the tunes of speech the notes have "much less variety, and have all a short time. With "respect also to time and measure, the poetic is less "various, and therefore less powerful, than that of "oratory; the former being like that of a short coun- "try song repeated to the end of the poem, but that "of oratory is varied all along, like the divisions "which a skilful musician runs upon a lute.

He proceeds to our former consideration, saying,— "The behaviour and gesture is also of force; as in "oratory so in converse, consisting of almost as ma- "ny motions, as there are moveable parts of the body, "all made with a certain agreeable measure between "one another, and at the same time answerable to "that of speech, which when easy and unaffected is "becoming."

A mastery in these two parts is what completes an actor; and I hope the rules I shall give for both, will be of use to such as have truly a genius for this art; the rules of which, like those of poetry, are only for those who have a genius, and are not perfectly to be understood by those who have not.

To begin therefore with action, the player is to consider, that it is not every rude and undesigning action which is his business, for that is what the ignorant as well as the skillful may have, nor can indeed want; but the action of a player is, what is

agreeable to personation, or the subject he represents. Now what he represents, is man in his various characters, manner and passions, and to these heads he must adjust every action; he must perfectly express the quality and manners of the man whose person he assumes, that is, he must know how his manners are compounded, and from thence know the several features, as I may call them, of his passions. A patriot, a prince, a beggar, a clown, &c. must each have their propriety, and distinction in action as well as words and language. An actor therefore must vary with his argument, that is, carry the person in all his manners and qualities with him in every action and passion; he must transform himself into every person he represents, since he is to act all sorts of actions and passions. Sometimes he is to be a lover, and know not only all the soft and tender addresses of one, but what are proper to the character of him who is in love, whether he be a prince or a peasant, a hot or fiery man, or of more moderate and phlegmatic constitution, and even the degrees of the passion he is possessed with. Sometimes he is to represent a choleric, hot and jealous man; then he must be throughly acquainted with all the motions and sentiments productive of those motions of the feet, hands and looks of such a person in such circumstances. Sometimes he is a person all dejected and bending under the extremeties of grief and sorrow; which changes the whole form and appearance of him in the representation, as it does really in nature. Sometimes he is distracted, and here nature will teach him, that his action has always something

wild and irregular, though even that regularly; that his eyes, his looks or countenance, motions of body, hands and feet, be all of a piece, and that he never falls into the indifferent state of calmness and unconcern. As he now represents Achilles, then Æneas, another time Hamlet, then Alexander the Great, and Oedipus, he ought to know perfectly well the characters of all these heroes, the very same passions differing in different heroes as their characters differ. The courage of Æneas, for example, of itself was sedate and temperate, and always attended with good nature; that of Turnus joined with fury, yet accompanied with generosity and greatness of mind. The valour of Mezentius was savage and cruel; he has no fury but fierceness, which is not a passion but habit, and nothing but the effect of fury cooled into a very keen hatred, and an inveterate malice. Turnus seems to fight to appease his anger, Mezentius to satisfy his revenge, his malice and barbarous thirst of blood. Turnus goes to the field with grief, which always attends anger, whereas Mezentius destroys with a barbarous joy; he is so far from fury, that he is hard to be provoked to common anger; who calmly killing Ondes, grows but half angry at his threats:

"At whom Mezentius smil'd with mingled ire."

Thus, it is plain, he has not the fury of Turnus, but a barbarity peculiar to himself, and a savage fierceness, according to his character. *Virg.* B. 10.

To know these different characters of established heroes, the actor need only be acquainted with the

poets, who write of them; if the poet who introduces them in his play have not sufficiently distinguished them. But to know the different compositions of the manners, and the passions springing from those manners, he ought to have an insight into moral philosophy, for they produce various appearances in the looks and actions, according to their various mixtures. For that the very same passion has various appearances, is plain from the history painters who have followed nature, viz.

Jordon of Antwerp, in a piece of our Savior's being taken from the cross, which is now in his grace the Duke of Marlborough's hands, the passion of grief is expressed with a wonderful variety; the grief of the Virgin Mother is in all the extremity of agony, that is consistent with life; nay, indeed, that scarce leaves any signs of remaining life in her; that of St. Mary Magdalen is an extreme grief, but mingled with love and tenderness, which she always expressed, after her conversion, for our blessed Lord; then the grief of St. John the Evangelist is strong but manly, and mixed with the tenderness of perfect friendship; and, that of Joseph of Arimathea, suitable to his years and love for Christ, more solemn, more contracted in himself, yet forcing an appearance in his looks.

Coypel's sacrifice of Jephtha's daughter, has very luckily expressed a great variety of this same passion.

The history painters indeed have observed a decorum in their pieces, which wants to be introduced

on our stage; for they never place any person on the cloth, who has not a concern in the action.

All the slaves in Le Brun's tent of Darius, participate of the grand concern of Sisigambis, Statira, &c. This would render the representation extremely solemn and beautiful; but on the stage, not only the supernumeraries, as they call them, or attendants, seem regardless of the great concern of the scene, and, even the actors themselves, who are on the stage, and not in the very principal parts will be whispering to one another, or bowing to their friends in the pit, or gazing about. But if they made playing their study, (or had indeed a genius to the art) as it is their business, they would not only, not be guilty of these absurdities, but would, like Le Brun, observe nature wherever they found her offer any thing that could contribute to their perfection. For this great master was often seen to observe a quarrel in the street between various people, and therein not only to regard the several degrees of the passions of anger rising in the affray, and their different recess, but the distinct expressions of it in every face that was concerned.

Our stage, indeed at the best, is but a very cold representation, when supported by loud prompting, to the great disgust of the audience, and spoiling the decorum of what is represented; for an imperfect actor affronts the audience, and betrays his own demerits. I must say this in the praise of Major Mohun, he is generally perfect, and gives the prompter little trouble, and never wrongs the poet by putting in any thing of his own; a fault which some applaud

themselves for, though they deserve a severe punishment for their equal folly and impudence. They forget Hamlet's advice to the players.——*Let those who play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them that will of themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be considered. That's* villainous, *and shows a most* pitiful *ambition in the* fool *that uses it.* This is too frequently done by some of our comedians. But it is, I think, an unpardonable fault in a tragedian, who through his imperfectness in his part shall speak on, any stuff that comes in his head, which must infallibly prejudice the true expression of the business of the play, let it be passion, description, or narration. Though notwithstanding this supinity in general, of too many of our modern players, there are some among them who are in earnest; as may, from many instances be pointed out in their respective parts. Among those players, who seem always to be in earnest, I must not omit the principal, those incomparable performers Miss Barry and Miss Bracegirdle; their action is always just, and produced naturally by the sentiments of the part they act, every where observing those rules prescribed to the poets by Horace, and which equally reach the players.

We weep and laugh as we see others do,
He only makes me sad, who shews the way.

And first is sad himself; then Telephus
I feel the weight of your calamities,
And fancy all your miseries my own;
But if you act them ill! I sleep or laugh.
Your look must alter as your subject does,
From kind to fierce, from wanton to serene.
For nature forms and softens us within,
And writes our fortune's changes in our face.
Pleasure enchants, impetuous rage transports,
And grief dejects and wrings the tortur'd soul;
And these are all interpreted by speech.
But he, whose words and fortunes disagree
Absurd, unpity'd grows a public jest.

ROSCOM.

The ladies just mentioned, always entered into their parts. How often have I heard Miss Barry say, that she never spoke these words in the *Orphan* —*Ah! poor* Castalio!—without weeping. Nay, I have frequently observed her to change her countenance several times, as the discourse of others on the stage have affected her, in the part she acted. This is being thoroughly concerned, this is to know one's part, this is to express the passions in the countenance and gesture.

The stage ought to be the *seat* of passion in its various kinds, and therefore the actors ought to be thoroughly acquainted with the whole nature of the affections, and habits of the mind, or else they will never be able to express them justly in their looks and gestures, as well as in the tone of their voice, and manner of utterance. They must know them in their various mixtures, as they are differently blended to-

gether in the different characters they represent; and then that excellent rule, in the *Essay on Poetry*, will be of equal use to the poet and the player.

——Who must look *within* to find
Those *secret* turns of *nature* in the *mind;*
Without this *part* in vain would be the *whole*,
And but a *body* all, without a soul. BUCK.

CHAP. V.

Some account of Miss Guyn, Miss Porter, Miss Bradshaw, &c.

MISS ELLEN GUYN, though mistress to a monarch, was the daughter to a Fruiterer in Covent Garden.

This shows that Sultans, Emperors and Kings,
When blood boils high will stoop to meanest things.

Nelly, for by that name she was universally known, came into the Theatre by the way of her profession, as a Fruiteress.

The Orange-basket her fair arm did suit,
Laden with Pippins and Hesperian fruit,
This first step rais'd, to th' wond'ring Pit she sold
The lovely fruit smiling with streaks of gold.
Fate now for her did its whole force engage,
And from the Pit she's mounted to the Stage:
There in full lustre did her glories shine,
And long eclips'd, spread forth their light divine.
There Hart's and Rowley's soul she did ensnare,
And made a King the rival to a play'r.

Such is Lord Rochester's account; and Mr. Lang-

bain* tells us that Miss Ellen Guyn spoke a new Prologue to an old play, called *The Knight of the Burning Pestle.*† We find her afterwards acting the parts of Almahide in *The Conquest of Grenada,* Florimel in *The Maiden Queen,* Donna Jacintha in *The Mock Astrologer,* Valeria in *The Royal Martyr;* in which Tragedy Miss Boutel played the part of Saint Catharine. Miss Guyn besides her own part of Valeria, was likewise appointed, in that character, to speak the Epilogue; in performing which, she so captivated the King, who was present the first night of the play, by the humorous turns she gave it, that his Majesty, when she had done, went behind the scenes and carried her off to an entertainment that night.

In the tragedy of *Tyrannic Love,* or *The Royal Martyr,* Valeria is daughter to the Roman Emperor Maximin; she being forced by her father to marry Placidius, stabs herself for love of Porphyrius, who thus condoles her loss.

> Our arms no more let Aquileia fear,
> But to her gates our peaceful Ensigns bear.
> While I mix Cyprus with my Myrtle wreath;
> Joy for my life, and mourn Valeria's death.

As Valeria is carrying off the stage dead, she thus accosts the bearer,

> Hold, are you mad? You curst confounded dog,
> I am to rise, and speak the Epilogue.

* See his account of the Dramatic Poets, 8vo. p. 210.

† A comedy written by Beaumont and Fletcher.

She then addresses herself to the audience.

I come, kind Gentlemen, strange news to tell ye,
I am the Ghost of poor departed Nelly.
Sweet Ladies be not frighted, I'll be civil,
I'm what I was, a little harmless devil.
For, after death, we sprites have just such natures
We had, for all the world, when human creatures;
And therefore I, that was an actress here,
Play all my tricks in hell, a Goblin there.
Gallants, look to't, you say there are no sprites;
But I'll come dance about your beds at nights.
And faith you'll be in a sweet kind of taking,
When I surprise you between sleep and waking.
To tell you true, I walk, because I die
Out of my calling, in a Tragedy.
O poet, damn'd dull poet, who could prove
So senseless! to make Nelly die for love;
Nay, what's yet worse, to kill me in the prime
Of Easter term, in Tart and Cheese-Cake time!
I'll fit the fop; for I'll not one word say,
T' excuse his Godly out-of-fashion play.
A play, which if you dare but twice sit out,
You'll all be slander'd, and be thought devout.
But farewell, Gentlemen, make haste to me,
I'm sure ere long to have your company.
As for my Epitaph when I am gone,
I'll trust no poet, but will write my own.
Here Nelly lies, who, though she liv'd a slattern,
Yet dy'd a Princess, acting in Saint Cattern.

Besides the parts she acted in the foregoing plays of Mr. Dryden, she performed a little song in his comedy called the *Assignation, or Love in a Nunnery*, with great archness. The song in this comedy is introduced by a young lady's being asked this

question—"Are you fit, at fifteen, to be trusted with your virtue? 'Tis as much, child, as your betters can manage at full twenty.

For 'tis of a *nature* so *subtile*,
That if 'tis not *luted* with *care*,
The *spirit* will *work* thro' the *toil*,
And *vanish away* into *air*.

To *keep* it, there nothing so *hard* is,
'Twill *go*, between *waking* and *sleeping*;
The *simple* too *weak* for a *guard* is,
And no *wit*, would be plagu'd with the *keeping*.

Nelly was eased of her virtue by Mr. Hart, at the same time that Lord Buckhurst sighed for it. But his Majesty carrying off the prize, we must leave her under the Royal protection.

The following letter is just come to our hands.

SIR,

AFTER the painful warfare of a public life, Miss Porter hoped the remainder of it might have been passed in silence. But since she finds otherwise, and that the true history of the stage is intended to convey a just narrative of the dead and the living, by her own consent a succinct but faithful account of hers is here transcribed.

Miss Mary Porter, was the daughter of Mr. Charles Porter, but as she lost her father when too young to have any knowledge of him, and being separated from her mother when but eight years old, she did not care to revive so tender a thought, the loss

of a parent, as giving her the greatest unhappiness, and being able to give no farther account of a parent, than barely his name.

Her mother marrying Mr. Porter privately without her parents consent, her father, Mr. Nicholas Mercator, being a German, and a man of letters, went, soon after his daughter's marriage, disgusted into France, and died there. He took with him all his family except his new married daughter and his eldest son, Mr. David Mercator, who was then one of the clerks belonging to the office of ordnance in the Tower of London. This gentleman, after the death of his father, took care of his niece without corresponding with his sister. For which reason Miss Porter's mother removed her from her uncle, and put her into Bartholomew Fair; where, the very first time of her appearance, in acting the part of the Fairy Queen, Miss Barry and Miss Bracegirdle took so great a liking to her, that, upon their representation of her performance, Mr. Betterton admitted her into the Theatre, and they treated her with the most tender indulgence.

Our young Fairy Queen was boarded with Mrs. Smith, sister to the Treasurer of the Playhouse, whose care of her was maternal, from the particular recommendation of her friends, more especially of Miss Bracegirdle.

The death of Mrs. Smith, in a few years, and the marriage of her daughter, who was Miss Porter's companion, she being then not above fifteen years of age, yet thought it proper to take the management of

her affairs into her own hands; and accordingly, as I have often heard her most gratefully express, discharged her debts, though not her obligations, to Mr. Smith, for his parternal care of her.

The veracity of these informations, sir, you may depend on, though coming from a friend; for as Miss Porter is not able to give a particular account of her family, so she would not by any means appear to be the author of her own history.

Thus heartily wishing you success in your present undertaking, and all others, for the public good, I am sir,

Your most humble servant,

P. M.

We find by this letter, that the public stand indebted to Miss Barry and Miss Bracegirdle, for this excellent actress; the only living ornament of the Tragic scene.

It was the opinion of a very good judge of Dramatical performers, that another gentlewoman, now living, was one of the greatest, and most promising Genij of her time. This Miss Bradshaw, who was taken off the stage, for her exemplary and prudent conduct, by Martin Folkes, Esq. a gentleman of a very considerable estate, who married her; and such has been her behaviour to him, that there is not a more happy couple. Miss Bradshaw, discoursing with a friend, who was giving her some instructions in her profession, told him, that she did all in her power to observe a rule laid down by Miss Barry,

"to make herself mistress of her part, and leave the "figure and action to nature," Now though a great genius may do this, yet art must be consulted in the study of the larger share of the professors of oratory; for, as Mr. Betterton most judiciously remarks, so great a man as Demosthenes perfected himself by consulting the gracefulness of the figure in his glass; for to express nature justly, one must be master of nature in all its appearances, which can only be drawn from observation, which will tell us, that the passions and habits of the mind discover themselves in our looks, actions and gestures.

Thus we find a *rolling eye*, which is quick and inconstant in its motion, argues a quick but light wit; a hot and choleric complexion, with an inconstant and impatient mind; and in a woman it gives a strong proof of wantonness and immodesty. Heavy dull eyes, a dull mind, and a difficulty of conception. For this reason we observe, that all or most people in years, sick men, and persons of a phlegmatic constitution are slow in turning of their eyes.

That extreme propension to *winking* in some eyes, proceed from a soul very subject to fear, arguing a weakness of spirit, and a feeble disposition to the eye-lids.

A bold *staring* eye, which fixes on a man, proceeds either from a blockish stupidity, as in rustics; impudence, as in malicious persons; prudence as in those in authority, or incontinence, as in lewd women.

Eyes *inflamed* and *fiery*, are the genuine effect of choler and anger; eyes quiet and calm with a secret kind of grace and pleasantness are the offspring of love and friendship.

Thus the *voice*, when loud discovers wrath and indignation of mind, and a small trembling voice proceeds from fear.

In like manner, to use no *actions* or *gestures* in discourse, is a sign of a heavy and slow disposition, as too much gesticulation proceeds from lightness; and a mean between both is the effect of wisdom and gravity; and if it be not too quick, it denotes magnanimity. Some are perpetually fiddling about their cloaths, so that they are scarce dressed till they go to bed, which is an argument of a childish and empty mind.

Some cast their *heads* from one side to the other wantonly and lightly, the true effect of folly and inconstancy. Others think it essential to *prayer*, to writh and wrest their necks about, which is a proof of hypocrisy, superstition, or foolishness. Some are wholly taken up in viewing themselves, the proportion of their limbs, features of their faces, and gracefulness of mein; which proceeds from pride, and a vain complaisance in themselves; of this number are coquets.

In this manner we might examine all the natural actions, which are to be found in men of different tempers. Yet not to dismiss the point without a fuller reflection, we shall here give the signification of

the natural gestures from the manuscript of a learned Jesuit who wrote on this subject.

Every *passion* or *emotion* of the *mind*, says he, has from nature its peculiar and proper countenance, sound and gesture; and the whole body of man, all his looks, and every tone of his voice, like strings on an instrument, receive their sounds from the various impulse of the passions.

The *demission* or *hanging down of the head* is the consequence of *grief* and *sorrow*. And this therefore is a posture and manner observed in the deprecations of the divine anger, and on such occasions ought to be observed in the imitations of those things.

A *lifting* or *tossing up of the head* is the gesture of *pride* and *arrogance*. Carrying the *head aloft* is the sign of joy, victory and triumph.

A *hard* and *bold front* or forehead is looked on as a mark of obstinacy, contumacy, perfidiousness and impudence.

The *soul* is the most visible in the *eyes*, as being, according to some, the perfect images of the mind; and as Pliny says, they burn, yet dissolve in floods; they dart their beams on objects, and seem not to see them; and when we kiss the eyes, we seem to touch the very soul.

Eyes lifted on high, shew arrogance and pride, but *cast down*, express humbleness of mind; yet we lift up our eyes when we address ourselves in prayer to God, and ask any thing of him.

Lifting in vain his burning eyes to heaven. VIRG.

Denial, aversion, nauseating, dissimulation, and neglect, are expressed by a turning away of the eyes.

A frequent *winking*, or *tremulous motion* of the *eyes*, argues malicious manners, and perverse and noxious thought and inclinations.

Eyes drowned in tears discover the most vehement and cruel grief, which is not capable of ease even from tears themselves.

To *raise our eyes* to any thing or person, is an argument of our attention to them with desire.

The *hand* put on the *mouth* is a token of silence by conviction, and is a ceremony of the heathen adoration.

The *contraction* of the *lips*, and the *ascaunt look* of the *eyes*, expresses the gesture of a deriding and malicious person. Shewing the teeth, and straitening the lips on them, shews indignation and anger.

Turning the whole face to any thing, is the gesture of him, who attends and has a peculiar regard to that one thing. To bend the countenance downward argues consciousness and guilt ; and, on the contrary, to lift up the face is a sign of a good conscience or innocence, hope and confidence.

The countenance, indeed, is changed into many forms, and is commonly the most certain index of the passions of the mind. When it is pale it betrays grief, sorrow and fear ; and envy, when it is very strong. A lowring and dark visage is the index of misery, labour and vehement agitations of the soul.

The *countenance*, as Quintilian observes, is of very great power and force in all that we do. In

this we discover when we are suppliant, when menacing, when kind, when sorrowful, when merry; in this we are lifted up and cast down; on this men depend, this they behold, and this they first take a view of before we speak; by this we love some, and hate others; and by this we understand a multitude of things.

The *arm extended and lifted up*, signifies the power of doing and accomplishing something; and is the gesture of authority, vigour and victory. On the contrary, the holding your arms close is a sign of bashfulness, modesty and diffidence.

As the hands are the most habil members of the body, and the most easily turned to all sides, so are they the indexes of many habits.

As we have two hands, the right and the left, we sometimes make use of one, sometimes of the other, and sometimes of both, to express the passion and habit. The chief forms of which I shall mention.

Lifting of one hand upright, or extending it, expresses force, vigour and power. The right hand is also extended upwards as a token of swearing, or taking a solemn oath; and this extension of the hand sometimes signifies pacification, and desire of silence.

Putting of the hand to the mouth, is the habit of one that is silent, and acting modesty; of admiration and consideration. The giving the hand is the gesture of striking a bargain, confirming an alliance, or of delivering one's self into the power of another. To take hold of the hand of another expresses admo-

nition, exhortation and encouragement. The reaching out an hand to another implies help and assistance. The lifting up both hands on high is the habit of one who implores, and expresses his misery. And the lifting up of both hands sometimes signifies congratulation to heaven for a deliverance, as in Virgil:

> His hands, now free from bands, he lifts on high,
> In grateful action to th' indulgent Gods.

Holding the hands in the bosom is the habit of the idle and negligent. Clapping the hands, among the Hebrews, signified deriding, insulting, and exploding; but among the Greeks and the Romans, it was, on the contrary, the expression of applause. The imposition of hands signifies the imparting a power in consecrating of victims.

"It is a difficult matter, says Quintilian, to relate "what a number of motions the hands have, without "which all action would be maimed and lame, since "these motions are almost as various as the words we "speak. For the other parts may be said to help a "man when he speaks, but the hands (as I may say) "speak themselves. Do we not by the hands desire "a thing? Do we not by these promise? call? dis-"miss? threaten? act the suppliant? express our "abomination or abhorrence? our fear? By these do "we not ask questions? deny? show our joy, grief, "doubt, confession, penitence, moderation, plenty, "number and time? Do not the same hands provoke, "forbid, make supplication, approve, admire, and "express shame? Do they not in showing of places

"and persons, supply the place of the adverbs and "pronouns? Insomuch that in so great a variety or "diversity of the tongues of all nations, this seems to "remain the universal language common to all."

It were to be wished that this art were a little revived in our age, when such useful members, which of old contributed so much to the expression of words, should now puzzle our players what to do with them, when they seldom or never add any grace to the action of the body, and never almost any thing to the explanation or fuller expression of the words and passions. To proceed a little farther.

Stamping the feet, among the Hebrews signified derision and scoffing. Among the Greeks, &c. imperiousness. A constant and direct foot, is the index of a steady, certain, constant and right study and aim of our designs.

On the contrary, *feet* full of motion, are the habit of the inconstant and fluctuating in their counsels and resolves. And the Greeks thought this in women a sign of a flagitious temper.

Thus have I recited the Jesuit's observations on the gestures and positions of the several parts and members of the body. And though some of them may seem too particular, yet I am persuaded, that a person of true judgment may find many excellences in them, which may afford him great helps in the rendering his gestures beautiful and expressive. There is no greater proof of this, than the example I have already urged of the Pantomime and Demetrius the

Cynic Philosopher, who cried out to him, *I hear, my friend, what you act; nor do I only see them, but methinks you speak with your hands.* But this speaking with the hands, (as it is here called) I find contain a great deal of the representing of the dancing dumb shows of the Mimes and Pantomimes. It may be perhaps objected, that these motions of the hands were so well known to the frequenters of the Theatres, that, like our talking on our fingers with those, who understand it, there would be no difficulty in the representation; but that if any stranger or foreigner should have been there, it would have been nothing but an unintelligible gesticulation, and what Shakespeare calls it, *unexplicable dumb shows;* whereas if these actions and gestures were drawn from their natural significancy, according to those marks I have already given, or others referred to by my quotation of Quintilian, they must be intelligible to all nations, on first sight to Barbarians, who never saw them before, as well as to Greeks and Romans, who conversed with them every day.

I allow the objection, but shall remove it by a farther account of the very same Pantomime, who lived in the time of Nero: The story is this—"A Barba-
"rian Prince who came from Pontus to Rome, on a
"visit to Nero, among other entertainments saw this
"dancer personate so lively, that though he knew
"nothing of what was sung, being half a Grecian,
"yet he understood all. Being therefore to return
"to his country after this entertainment of Nero's

" and bid ask what he would and it should be grant-
" ed, replied, give me the dancer, and you will infi-
" nitely oblige me. Nero asking him of what use he
" would be to him? My neighbor Barbarians (says
" he) are of different languages, nor is it easy for me
" to find interpreters for them; this fellow therefore,
" as often as I have need, shall expound to me by
" his gestures." So clear and intelligible were his actions and gestures, and so derived from the nature of the thing represented; which is a proof, that there are certain natural significations of the motions of the hands, and other members of the body, which are obvious to the understanding of the sensible men of all nations. If those which I have given you from my Jesuit be not, yet I am very sure, that many of them are explained by him, which will be plain to a serious observer.

Gesture has therefore this advantage above mere speaking, that by this we are understood by those of our own language, but by action and gesture (I mean just and regular action) we make our thoughts and passions intelligible to all nations and tongues. It is, as I have observed from Quintilian, the common speech of all mankind, which strikes our understanding by our eyes, as effectually as speaking does by the ears; nay, perhaps, makes the more effectual impression, that sense being the most vivacious and touching, according to Horace in his Art of Poetry:

> But what we hear moves less, than what we see;
> Spectators only have their eyes to trust. Roscom.

I think we have already assigned tolerable reasons why movement and action should teach us so sensibly; nay, the very representation of them in painting often strikes the passions, and makes impressions on our minds more strong and vivid, than all the force of words. The chief work is certainly done by speech in most other ways of public discourse, either at the Bar, or in the Pulpit; where the weight of the reason and the proof are first and most to be considered: But on the stage, where the passions are chiefly in view, the best speaking destitute of action and gesture (the life of all speaking) proves but a heavy, dull, and dead discourse.

This, in some measure, will likewise reach all things delivered in public, since we find Pliny the younger talking of people in his days reciting of their speeches or poems, either by reading them themselves, or by having them read by others, tell us, that this reading them was a very great disadvantage to the excellence of their performance either way, lessening both their eloquence and character, since the principal helps of pronunciation, the eyes and the hands, could not perform their office, being otherwise employed to read, and not adorn the utterance with their proper motions; insomuch that it was no manner of wonder, that the attention of the audience grew languid on so unactive an entertainment. On the contrary, when any discourse receives force and life, not only from the propriety and graces of speaking agreeable to the subject, but from a proper action and gesture for it, it is truly moving, penetrating,

transporting; it has a soul, it has life, it has vigour and energy not to be resisted. For then the player, the preacher or pleader, holds his audience by the eyes, as well as ears, and engrosses their attention by a double force. This seems to be well represented in some words of Cicero to Cecilius a young orator, in his first cause, who would needs undertake the action against Verres, in opposition to Hortensius. After he has shown his incapacity in many points to accuse Verres, both in ability, and in not being free from a suspicion of a share in the guilt, he comes at last to the power and art of his adversary. *Hortensius*, (says he) *reflect, consider, again and again what you are going to do! for there seems to me to be some danger not only of his oppressing you with his words, but even of his confounding and dazzling the eyes of your understanding with his gesture, and the motion of his body, and so entirely drive you from your design, and from all your thoughts.*

Cicero, in his books of oratory, tells us, that Crassus pleading against Brutus, delivered his words with such an accent and such a gesture, that he perfectly confounded the latter, and put him out of countenance, fixing his eyes stedfastly on him, and addressing all his action to him, as if he would devour him with a look and a word.

But to make these motions of the face and hands easily understood, that is, useful in moving the passions of the auditors, or rather spectators, they must be properly suited to the thing you speak of, your thoughts and design; and always resembling the

passion you would express or excite. Thus you must never speak of mournful things with a gay and brisk look, nor affirm any thing with the action of denial; for that would make what you say of no manner of authority or credit; you would gain neither belief nor admiration. You must also have a peculiar care of avoiding all manner of affectation in your action and gesture, for that is most commonly ridiculous and odious, unless where the actor is to express some affectation in the character he represents, as in Melantha in *Marriage à la-mode*, and Millimant in *The Way of the World*. But even then that very affectation must be unaffected, as those two parts were admirably performed by Miss Mountfort and Miss Bracegirdle. But your action must appear purely natural, as the genuine offspring of the things you express, and the passion which moves you to speak in that manner.

In fine, the player, pleader or preacher must have such nice address in the management of his gestures, that there may be nothing in all the various motions and dispositions of his body which may be offensive to the eye of the spectator; as well as nothing grating and disobliging to the ears of his auditors, in his pronunciation; else will his person be less agreeable, and his speech less efficacious to both, by wanting all that grace, virtue and power it would otherwise obtain.

It is true, it must be confessed, that the art of gesture seems more difficult to be obtained, than the art of speaking; because a man's own ear may be judge

of the voice and its several variations, but cannot see his face at all, and the motion of the other parts of the body but very imperfectly. Demosthenes, as we have said, to make a true judgment how far his face and limbs moved and kept to the rules of good action and gesture, set before him a large looking-glass sufficient to represent the whole body at one view, to direct him in distinguishing between *right* and *wrong*, decent and indecent actions; but yet, though this might not be unuseful, it lies under this disadvantage, that it represents to the *right* what is on the *left*, and on the *left* what is on the *right hand*; so that when you make a motion with your *right hand*, the reflection makes it seem as done by the *left*, which confounds the gesture, and gives it an aukward appearance. But to rectify these erroneous motions from the glass, by changing hands, might contract such an ill habit, as ought with the utmost caution to be avoided.

Gesture on the stage was never better observed, than by that excellent Comedian Mr. Lacy. And in this very particular action Mr. Betterton used often to acknowledge his obligations to Mr. Taylor of the Black Friars Company, and to Mr. Lowen, sen. the former, being instructed in the character of Hamlet, and the latter in that of Henry VIII. by Shakespeare himself; these, says he, being my two ever honored masters in those parts. But here we must lament the great loss our English stage sustained in the untimely death of Mr. William Betterton, who was drowned in swimming at Wallingford in Berk-

shire, otherwise the merits of his father might have longer continued amongst us.

We shall close this chapter with the short account left us of that memorable Comedian above mentioned.

Mr. John Lacy was a native of Yorkshire, born near Doncaster. He was bred in the profession of a dancing master, but pursuing some military views, he became a Lieutenant and Quarter Master under Colonel Gerrard. He was a well shaped man, of a noble stature, and justly proportioned. What brought him upon the stage, we cannot determine; but a reputable writer assures us, that as Mr. Betterton has observed,* "He was a Comedian whose abilities in "action were sufficiently known to all who frequented the King's Theatre. He performed all the "parts he undertook to a miracle, in so much that "as the age he lived in never had, so, I am apt to "believe, no other will ever have his equal, at least "not his superior. He was so well approved of by "king Charles II. an undeniable judge in dramatic "arts, that he caused his picture to be drawn in three "characters in one and the same piece, (Teague, in "the *Committee;* Mr. Scruple, in the *Cheats;* and "Monsieur Galliard, in the *Variety;*) now in the "Royal Palace of Windsor Castle. Nor did his "talent wholly lie in acting, he knew both how to "judge and write plays, and is the author of three "Comedies.

I. "*The Dumb Lady;* or, *The Farrier made* "*Physician.* Taken from *Le Medicin malgre luy.*

* Langhaine, in his account of the Eng. Dram. Poets. p. 317.

" Whoever will compare them together, will find that " Mr. Lacy has greatly improved Moliere.

II. " *The Old Troop;* or, *Monsieur Ragou.*— " Taken likewise as I conjecture, from the French. " Both these plays were acted with universal ap- " plause.

III. " *Sir Hercules Buffon;* or, *The Poetical* " *Squire.* This play was brought upon the stage, " after the author's decease, 1684. In the Prologue, " spoken by Jo. Haines, were these lines,

Know that fam'd Lacy, ornament o' th' stage,
That standard of Comedy, in our age;
Wrote this play:
And if it takes not, all we can say on't,
Is, we've his fiddle, not his hand to play on't.

This Comedy was very well received.

CHAP. VI.

The Amour of the Duchess of Cleveland, and Mr. Goodman, &c.

As Mr. Hart was rival to Lord Buckhurst, and the King, in the first affections of Miss Guyn; it likewise so happened, that Mr. Goodman the player, was another of his Majesty's rivals in the esteem of the Duchess of Cleveland.

The late famous Mrs. Manley, author of the *Atalantis*, has in the account of her life,* given a rela-

*See Mrs. Manley's Life, 8vo. p. 31, &c. printed for E. Curll.

tion of her own adventures under the name of Rivella, and drawn the character of the Duchess of Cleveland under that of Hilaria. The Duchess was passionately fond of new faces, of which sex soever; and used a thousand arguments to dissuade Rivella from wearing away her bloom in grief and solitude. She read her learned lectures upon the ill nature of the world, that would never restore a woman's reputation, how innocent soever she really were, if appearances proved to be against her; therefore Hilaria gives Rivella this advice, which she did not disdain to practice, viz. *To make herself as happy as she could, without valuing or regretting those, by whom it was impossible to be valued.*

Rivella has often declared, that from Hilaria she received the first ill impressions of Count Fortunatus,* touching his ingratitude, immorality and avarice; being herself an eye witness when he denied Hilaria (who had given him thousands) the common civility of lending her twenty guineas at Basset; which together with betraying his master, and raising himself by his sister's dishonor, she had always esteemed a just and flaming subject for satire.

Rivella had now reigned six months in Hilaria's favour, an age to one of her inconstant temper; when that lady found out a new face, to which the old must give place; and such a one of whom she could not justly have any jealousy in point of youth or agreeableness; the person I speak of was the pretended

* Late Duke of M******

Madam Beauclair, a kitchen maid, married to her master, who had been refuged with King James in France.

This pretended French lady Beauclair plyed at Madam Mazarin's Basset Table, and was also of use to her in love affairs.

As to the character of Hilaria, she was querilous, fierce, loquacious; excessively fond, or imfamously rude; the extremes of prodigality, and covetousness; of love and hatred; of dotage and aversion, were joined together in her soul.

The whole court and city knew that the man Hilaria was in love with was Mr. Goodman the player, for his fine person and graceful mien; he being the second rival in the favour of two of the royal mistresses. As Mr. Goodman and Mr. Hart equally captivated the ladies on the stage, it is not matter of any admiration, that they should equally charm in more delightful recesses: For,

> In love and death, such is the human frame.
> The monarch and the mimic are the same.

Mr. Pope has thus recorded female luxury and its extravagances; not forgetting Hilaria:

> *Con Philips* cries, *a sneaking dog I hate,*
> That's all *three* lovers have for their estate!
> *Treat on, treat on,* is her eternal note,
> And lands and tenements go down her throat.
> Not so who of ten thousand gull'd her Knight,
> Then ask'd ten thousand for a second night;

The gallant too, to whom she paid it down,
Liv'd to refuse that mistress half a crown.*

The gallant here referred to by the satirist was the same person shadowed by Rivella under the character of Count Fortunatus, whose predominant vices of ingratitude and avarice will never be obliterated.

From these scenes of love and gallantry, let us return once more to the scenes of the drama.

We shall here lay down some particular rules of action; which justly weighed, will be of use to the Bar and the Pulpit, as well as the stage, provided, that the student allows a more strong, vivid and violent gesture to the plays, than to either of the other.

We shall therefore begin with the government, order and balance, of the whole body; and thence proceed to the regiment and proper motions of the head, the eyes, the eye-brows, and indeed the whole face; then conclude with the actions of the hands, more copious and various than all the other parts of the body.

The place and posture of the body ought not to be changed every moment, since so fickle an agitation is trifling and light; nor, on the other hand, should it always keep the same position, fixed like a pillar or marble statue. For this, in the first place, is unnatural, and must therefore be disagreeable, since God has so formed the body with members disposing it to motion, that it must move either as the impulse of the mind directs, or as the necessary occasions of

* The Duchess of Cleveland and Duke of M*****

the body require. This heavy stability, or thoughtless fixedness, by losing that variety, which is so becoming of, and agreeable in the change and diversity of speech and discourse, and gives admiration to every thing it adorns, loses likewise that genteelness and grace, which engages the attention by pleasing the eye. Being taught to dance will very much contribute in general to the graceful motion of the whole body, especially in motions, that are not immediately embarrassed with the passions.

That the head has various gestures and signs, intimations and hints, by which it is capable of expressing consent, refusal confirmation, admiration, anger, &c. is what every one knows, who has ever considered at all. It might therefore be thought superfluous to treat particularly of them. But this rule may be laid down on this head in general; first that it ought not to be lifted up too high, and stretched out extravagantly, which is the mark of arrogance and haughtiness; but an exception to this rule will come in for the player, who is to act a person of that character. Nor on the other side should it be hung down upon the breast, which is both disagreeable to the eye, in rendering the mien clumsy and dull; and would prove extremely prejudicial to the voice, depriving it of its clearness, distinction, and that intelligibility, which it ought to have. Nor should the head always lean towards the shoulders, which is equally rustic and affected, or a great mark of indifference, languidness, and a faint inclination. But the head, in all the calmer speeches at least, ought

to be kept in its just natural state and upright position. In the agitation indeed of a passion, the position will naturally follow the several accesses and recesses of the passion, whether grief, anger, &c.

We must farther observe, that the head must not be kept always like that of a statue without motion; nor must it on the contrary be moving perpetually, and always throwing itself about on every different expression. It must therefore shun these ridiculous extremes, turn gently on the neck, as often as occasion requires a motion, according to the nature of the thing, turning now to one side, and then to another, and then return to such a decent position, as your voice may best be heard by all or the generality of the audience. The head ought always to be turned on the same side, to which the *actions* of the rest of the body are directed, except when they are employed to express our aversion to things, we refuse; or on things we detest and abhor; for these things we reject with the *right hand,* at the same time turning the head away to the *left.*

But the greatest life and grace of *action* derive themselves from the *face.* For this reason, Crassus in Cicero remarks, that Roscius, though so excellent a player, lost his admiration among the Romans on the stage, because the mask he wore denied the audience the sight of those motions and attractive charms which were to be discovered in the countenance. Some have been extremely surprised at the ancients use of those masks on the stage, which they called the *Personæ!* nor is it easy to imagine how they were

made, not to destroy that grace and beauty of acting in the management of the lineaments of the face, which by all that we have of that kind must be entirely hid; and yet what Plutarch tells us of Demosthenes and Cicero, is a proof, that the players of Athens and Rome were absolute masters of speaking and action. It is true, there is much in the voice to express the passion artfully, yet certainly the several figurations of the countenance, as of the *eyes, brow, mouth,* and the like, add the most touching and the most moving beauties. But this observation before mentioned sufficiently proves, that those were entirely lost by the *Personæ;* which is a proof, that in whatever they excelled our actors, we have the advantage in the making the representation perfect, by enjoying the benefit of exposing all the motions of the face.

The character which Lucian gives of those *Personæ* makes them extremely rediculous, and by his description of the rest of the Tragic equipage, would make us very much doubt their excellence in other parts of acting.* "What a deformed and frightful "sight is it, to see a man raised to a prodigious "length, stalking on exalted buskins, his face dis-"guised with a grim vizor, widely gaping, as if he "meant to devour the spectators; I forbear to speak "of his stuffed breasts and fore-bellies, which make "an adventitious and artificial corpulency, lest his "unnatural length should carry a disproportion to "his slenderness.

* See Dr. Mayne's translation of Lucian.

Surely such a figure as Lucian gives the Tragedian, must not only render him incapable of giving the body all its just motions and graceful gestures, of which we are talking, and which the great writers celebrate so much; but must be ridiculous to a farce. But though what Lucian represents, may be looked upon as in the time of the corruption of the Roman stage, yet the *Cothurni* and the *Personæ* were in use among the Greeks, and must have been extremely prejudicial to the beauty of the representation. The reason given for the first was the common opinion, that the heroes of former times were larger and taller than our cotemporaries; and it is probable that the first use of the vizor, which succeeded the besmearing the face with lees of wine in the time of Thespis, was chiefly to express the looks and countenance of the several heroes represented, according to their statues and portraitures, which made the players always new to the audience; whereas we coming always on the stage with the same face, put a force on the imagination of the audience to fancy us other than the same persons. But there is a method, which if maturely studied, would obtain this variety of countenance more artfully, and at the same time inspire the actor better with the nature and genius of his part. In a French book written by one Gafferel a Monk, he tells us, that when he was at Rome he went to see Campanella in the Inquisition, and found him making abundance of faces; which he at first imagined, proceeded from the torments he had undergone; but he soon undeceived him by inquiring

what sort of countenance such a Cardinal had, to whom he had just before sent; for he was forming his countenance, as much as he could, to what he knew of his, that he might know what his answer would be.

If therefore a player, was acquainted with the character of his hero, so far as to have an account of his features and looks, or of any one living of the same character, he would not only vary his face so much by that means, as to appear quite another face, by raising, or falling, contracting, or extending the brows; giving a brisk or sullen, sprightly or heavy turn to his eyes; sharpening or swelling his nostrils, and the various positions of his mouth, which by practice would grow familiar, and wonderfully improve the art of acting, and raise the noble diversion to greater esteem. The studying History Painting would be very useful on this occasion, because the knowledge of the figure and lineaments of the persons represented will teach the actor to vary and change his figure, which would make him not always the same in all parts, but his very countenance so changed, that they would not only have other thoughts themselves, but raise others in the audience. Some carry their heads aloft and stately, others pucker their brows, look with a piercing eye, as we have said; and these things thoroughly considered by the player, would in every part make him a new man: and with more beauty supply the *Personæ* of the ancients, and raise our stage to a greater merit, than theirs could pretend to, which deprived the audience

of the noblest and most vivacious part of the representation, in the loss of the motions of the face; of which we ought to take a peculiar care, since it is on that, which the audience or spectators generally fix their eyes the whole time of the action.

Exercise and frequent practice ought to reform the least error in this particular, because in the performance every one presently discovers it, though the actor sees it not himself. The surest way of correcting this, is either a looking glass, or a judicious friend, who can and will let you know what countenance is agreeable, and what the contrary. But this is a general rule, without any exception, that you adjust all the lines and motions of the face to the subject of your discourse, the passion you feel within you, or should according to your part feel, or would raise in those who hear and see you. You must likewise consider the quality you represent, as well as the quality of those to whom you speak; for even in great degrees of the passions the difference and distance of that has a greater or less awe upon the very appearance of the passion. The countenance must be brightened with a pleasant gaiety on things that are agreeable, and that according to the degrees of their being so; and likewise in joy, which must still be heightened in the passion of love; though indeed the countenance in the expression of this passion is extremely various, participating sometimes of the transports of joy, sometimes of the agonies of grief; it is sometimes mingled with the heats of anger, and

sometimes smiles with all the pleasing tranquillity of an equal joy. Sadness or gravity must prevail in the countenance, when the subject is grave, melancholy or sorrowful; and grief is to be expressed according to its various degrees of violence. Hate has its peculiar expression composed of grief, envy, and anger, a mixture of all which ought to appear in the eye. When you bring or offer comfort, mildness and affability ought to be seen in your countenance, as severity should, when you censure or reprehend.

It is not in the least to be doubted, but that several other gentlemen of the stage have taken their turns among the court ladies, as well as Mr. Hart and Mr. Goodman. However, we shall drop that inquiry, and resume the subject of their Theatrical excellences.

I have heard Mr. Betterton mention these parts as some of Mr. Hart's shining characters; Arbaces, in *King and no King;* Amintor, in *The Maid's Tragedy; Rollo Duke of Normandy;* Brutus, in *Julius Cesar; Othello* and *Alexander the Great.* In this last character he appeared with such majesty in his looks and gesture, that a Courtier of the first rank was pleased to honour him with this commendation, *Hart,* says he, *might teach any King on earth how to comport himself.* He was no less inferior in Comedy. In the parts of Mosca, in *Valpone;* Don John, in the *Chances;* Wildblood, in the *Mock Astrologer,* &c. In all the tragic and comic parts he performed he arrived to a pitch not equalled by any of his cotemporaries, nor attainable by his successors. But

Mr. Betterton, and Major Mohun may be said to have been the two Socias. *Par Nobile Fratrum*, as to their justness of acting. The latter shone in the parts of *Valpone;* Face, in the *Alchymist;* Melantius, in *The Maid's Tragedy;* Mordonius, in *King and no King;* Cassius, in *Julius Cesar;* Clytus, in *Alexander the Great; Mithridates King of Pontus;* in performing which part, Mr. Lee cried out, in the greatest extacy, *O Mohun, Mohun! thou little man of mettle, were I to write a hundred plays thou shouldst be in them all.*

Many were the good actors of those days, whose excellences to enumerate would be an endless task, for which reason it is sufficient to have mentioned some of the principal. Mr. Betterton likewise succeeded in Major Mohun's parts.

Mr. Kynaston was so famous for women's parts, that he played Artihope, in *The Unfortunate Lovers;* the Princess, in *The Mad Lover;* Ismenia, in *The Maid in the Mill; Aglauria*, &c. being parts so greatly moving compassion, that it has been disputed among the judicious, whether any woman could have more sensibly touched the passions.

The play called *Love and Honour*, written by Sir William D'Avenant, was acted before the Court, and very richly drest. The King gave Mr. Betterton, who played Prince Alvaro, his coronation suit. And to Mr. Harris who played Prince Prospero, the Duke of York gave his suit. And to Mr. Price, who acted Lionel Duke of Parma, the Lord Oxford gave his cloaths. Miss Davenport an excellent actress played Evandra.

Among the many fine players of this age Mr. Sandford must be remembered, and sorry we are, that we can obtain no other notices of him than what we find among the *Dramatis Personæ* perfixed to the plays wherein he acted.

Mr. Betterton brought three plays himself upon the stage.

I. *The Woman made a Justice.* In this Comedy Miss Long, a fine actress, played the part of the Justice.

II. *The Unjust Judge;* or, *Appias and Virginia,* a Tragedy. Mr. Betterton, played Virginius and his wife Virginia.

III. *The Amorous Widow;* or, the *Wanton Wife.* In this Comedy Mr. Nokes played Sir Barnaby Brittle, and Miss Long, Mrs. Brittle, in which part Miss Bracegirdle succeeded her.

All these plays were well received; but the last only is preserved, the first and second being lost.

We must here observe, that notwithstanding Mr. Otway and Mr. Lee had very strong inclinations to come upon the stage, yet both these gentlemen found writing and playing so widely different, that they were each of them dashed in their first attempt.

The stage having worn out the reign of its royal master King Charles II. and the kingdom having undergone the grand revolution occasioned by the abdication of King James, we shall now give an account of the state of the Theatre under King William and Queen Mary.

A great difference happening between the United

Patentees of King Charles's and the Duke of York's Companies after the Revolution, the chief actors, viz. Mr. Betterton and his friends, together with Miss Barry, Miss Bracegirdle, &c. represented the great oppression they lay under, in a petition to the right honorable Charles Earl of Dorset, &c. then Lord Chamberlain of the household. This generous nobleman believing their complaints to be just, did, with the assistance of Sir Robert Howard, procure for them of their Majesties a separate license, constituting Mr. Congreve, Mr. Betterton, Miss Barry and Miss Bracegirdle Patentees. By this authority they formed a select Company, and metamorphosing the Tennis Court in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, opened their new Theatre the last day of April 1695, with a Comedy written by Mr. Congreve, called, *Love for Love.*

In this company were Mr. Smith, Mr. Sandford, Mr. Underhill, Mr. Dogget, Mr. Verbruggen, Mr. Powell, Mr. Mountfort, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Penkethman, Mr. Bullock, Mr. Booth, &c.

We shall, for some time, leave these gentlemen in the discharge of their profession, and resume the farther instructions of Mr. Betterton for attaining the oratory of the Stage, the Bar and the Pulpit.

The management of the eyes in an orator at the Bar, or in the Pulpit, seems something different, from what they must be in a player, though if we make the rest of the actors on the stage with him at the same time, his auditors, the rules for *one* will reach the *other;* for so indeed they are, for all the regard that is to be had to the audience is that they

see and hear distinctly, what we act and what we speak; that they may judge justly of our positions, gestures and utterance, in regard to each other.

The orator therefore must always be casting his eyes on some or other of his auditors, and turning them gently from side to side with an air of regard, sometimes on one person, and sometimes on another, and not fix them immoveably on one part of the audience, which is extremely unaffecting and dull, much less moving, than when we look them decently in the face, as in common discourse. This will hold good in playing, if applied according to my former rule; for indeed I have observed frequently some players, who pass for great ones, have their eyes lifted up to the galleries, or top of the house, when they are engaged in a discourse of some heat, as if indeed they were conning a lesson, not acting a part. Theophrastus himself condemned Tamariscus, a player of his time, who whenever he spoke on the stage, turned his eyes from those who were to hear him, and kept them fixed all the while on one single and insensible object. But nature acts directly in a contrary manner, and yet she ought to be the player's as well as the Poet's mistress. No man is engaged in dispute, or any argument of moment, but his eyes and all his regard are fixed on the person he talks with; not but that there are times according to the turn or crisis of a passion, where the eyes may with great beauty be turned from the object we address to several ways, as in appeals to heaven, imploring assistance, to join in your addresses to any one, and the like.

When we are free from passion, and in any discourse which requires no great motion, as our modern Tragedies too frequently suffer their chief parts to be, our aspect should be pleasant, our looks direct, neither severe nor aside, unless we fall into a passion, which requires the contrary. For then nature, if we obey her summons, will alter our looks and gestures. Thus when a man speaks in anger, his imagination is inflamed, and kindles a sort of fire in his eyes, which sparkles from them in such a manner, that a stranger, who understood not a word of the language, or a deaf man, who could not hear the loudest tone of his voice, would not fail of perceiving his fury and indignation. And this fire of their eyes will easily strike those of their audience which are continually fixed on yours; and by a strange sympathetic infection, it will set them on fire too with the very same passion.

I would not be misunderstood, when I say you must wholly place your eyes on the person or persons you are engaged with on the stage; I mean, that at the same time both parties keep such a position in regard of the audience, that even these beauties escape not their observation, though never so justly directed. As in a piece of History Painting, though the figures fix their eyes ever so directly to each other, yet the beholder, by the advantage of their position, has a full view of the expression of the soul in the eyes of the figures.

The looks and just expressions of all the other passions has the same effect, as this we have men-

tioned of anger. For if the *grief* of another touches you with a real compassion, tears will flow from your eyes, whether you will or not. And this art of weeping was studied with great application by the ancient players; and they made so extraordinary a progress in it, and worked the counterfeit so near a reality, that their faces used to be all over bedewed with tears when they came off the stage.

They were likewise so much affected by acting these mournful parts, that they for some time, when off the stage, seemed, as I have observed, struck by a real sorrow to the heart.

This behaviour justifies what the ancients practised in heightening their theatrical sorrow, by fixing the mind on real objects; or by working the actor up by a strong imagination that he is the very person, and in the very same circumstances, which will make the case so very much his own, that he will not want fire in anger, nor tears in grief; and then he need not fear affecting the audience; for passions are wonderfully conveyed; the tears of *one* melting the heart of the *other*, by a very visible sympathy between their imaginations and aspects.

You must lift up or cast down, your eyes, according to the nature of the things you speak of; thus if of heaven, your eyes naturally are lifted up; if of earth, or hell, or any thing terrestial, they are as naturally cast down. Your eyes must also be directed according to the passions; as to deject them on things of disgrace, and which you are ashamed of; and raise them on things of honor, which you can glory in

with confidence and reputation. In swearing, or taking a solemn oath, or attestation of any thing, to the veriety of what you say, you turn your eyes, and in the same action lift up your hand to the thing you swear by, or attest.

Your eye-brows must neither be immoveable, nor always in motion; nor must they both be raised on every thing that is spoken with eagerness and consent; and much less must one be raised, and the other cast down; but generally they must remain in the same posture and equality, which they have by nature, allowing them their due motion when the passions require it; that is, to contract themselves and frown in *sorrow;* to smooth and dilate themselves in *joy;* to hang down in *humility,* &c.

The *mouth* must never be writhed, nor the *lips* bit or licked, which are all ungenteel and unmannerly actions, and yet what some are frequently guilty of; yet in some efforts or starts of passion, the lips have their share of action, but this more on the stage, than in any other public speaking, either in the Pulpit, or at the Bar; because the stage is, or ought to be, an imitation of nature in those actions and discourses, which are produced between man and man by any passion, or on any business, which can afford action; for all other has in reality nothing to do with the scene.

Though to shrug up the shoulders be no gesture in oratory, yet on the stage the character of the person, and the subject of his discourse, may render it proper enough; though I confess, it seems more a-

dapted to Comedy, than Tragedy, where all should be great and solemn, and with which the gravest of the orators actions will agree. I have read of a pleasant method, that Demosthenes took to cure himself of this vice of action, for he at first was mightily given to it; he used to exercise himself in declaiming in a narrow and straight place, with a dagger hung just over his shoulders; so that as often as he shrugged them up, the point, by pricking his shoulders, put him in mind of his error; which in time removed the defect.

Others thrust out the belly, and throw back the head, both gestures unbecoming and indecent.

We come now to the hands, which, as they are the chief instruments of action, varying themselves as many ways, as they are capable of expressing things, so is it a difficult matter to give such rules as are without exception. Those natural significations of particular gestures, and what I shall here add, will I hope, be some light to the young actor in this particular. 1st. I would have him regard the *action* of the hands, as to their expression of *accusation, deprecation, threats, desire*, &c. and to weigh well what those actions are, and in what manner expressed; and then considering how large a share those actions have in all manner of discourse, he will find that his hands need never be idle, or employed in an insignificant or unbeautiful gesture.

In the beginning of a solemn speech or oration, as in that of Anthony on the death of Cesar, or of

Brutus on the same occasion, there is no gesture, at least of any consideration, unless it begin abruptly, as *O Jupiter, O heavens! is this to be borne? the very ships then in our eyes, which I preserved,* &c. extending here his hands first to heaven, and then to the ships. In all regular gestures of the hands, they ought perfectly to correspond with one another; as in starting in amaze, on a sudden fright, as Hamlet in the scene between him and his mother, on the appearance of his father's Ghost——

"Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly Guards!"

This is spoke with arms and hands extended, and expressing his concern, as well as his *eyes*, and *whole face*. If an action comes to be used by only one hand, that must be by the *right*, it being indecent to make a gesture with the *left* alone; except you should say any such thing as,

"Rather than be guilty of so foul a deed,
I'd cut this right hand off, &c.

For here the actions must be expressed by the *left* hand, because the *right* is the member to suffer. When you speak of yourself, the *right* not the *left* hand must be applied to the bosom, declaring your own faculties, and passions; your heart, your soul, or your conscience. But this action, generally speaking, should be only applied or expressed by laying the hand gently on the breast, and not by thumping

it as some people do. The gesture must pass from the *left* to the *right*, and there end with gentleness and moderation, at least not stretch to the extremity of violence. You must be sure, as you begin your action with what you say, so you must end it when you have done speaking; for action either before or after utterance is highly ridiculous. The movement or gestures of your hands must always be agreeable to the nature of the words, that you speak; for when you say *come in*, or *approach*, you must not stretch out your hand with a repulsive gesture; nor, on the contrary, when you say, *stand back*, must your gesture be inviting; nor must you join your hands, when you command separation; nor open them, when your order is *closing;* nor hang them down, when you bid *raise such a thing*, or *person;* nor lift them up, when you say *throw them down*. For all these gestures would be so visibly against nature, that you would be laughed at by all that saw or heard you. By these instances of faulty action, you may easily see the right, and gather this rule, that as much as possible every gesture you use should express the nature of the words you utter, which would sufficiently and beautifully employ your hands.

It is impossible to have any great emotion or gesture of the body, without the action of the hands, to answer the figures of discourse, which are made use of in all poetical, as well as rhetorical diction; for poetry derives its beauty in that from rhetoric, as it does its order and justness from grammar; which surprises me, that some of our modern taking poets

value themselves on that, which is not properly poetry, but only made use of as an ornament, and drawn from other arts and sciences.

Thus when Medea says,

> These images of Jason
> With my own hands I'll strangle, &c.

it is certain the action ought to be expressed by the hands, to give it all its force.

In the lifting up the hands, to preserve the grace, you ought not raise them above the eyes; to stretch them farther might disorder and distort the body; nor must they be very little lower, because that position gives a beauty to the figure; besides, this posture being generally on some surprise, admiration, abhorrence, &c. which proceeds from the object, that affects the eye, nature by a sort of mechanic motion throws the hands out as guards to the eyes on such an occasion.

You must never let either of your hands hang down, as if lame or dead; for that is very disagreeable to the eye, and argues no passion in the imagination. In short, your hands must always be in view of your eyes, and so corresponding with the motions of the head, eyes, and body, that the spectator may see their concurrence, every one in its own way to signify the same thing, which will make a more agreeable, and by consequence a deeper impression on their senses, and their understanding.

Your arms you should not stretch out side ways, above half a foot from the trunk of your body; you will otherwise throw your gesture quite out of your

sight, unless you turn your head also aside to pursue it, which would be very ridiculous.

In swearing, attestation, or taking any solemn vow or oath, you must raise your hand. An exclamation requires the same action; but so that the gesture may not only answer the pronunciation, or utterance, but both the nature of the thing, and the meaning of the words. In public speeches, orations, and sermons, it is true your hands ought not to be always in motion, a vice which was once called the *babbling of the hands;* and, perhaps, it may reach some characters, and speeches in plays; but I am of opinion, that the hands in acting ought very seldom to be wholly quiescent, and that if we had the art of the Pantomimes, of expressing things so clearly with their hands, as to make the gestures supply words, the joining these significant actions to the words and passions justly drawn by the poet, would be no contemptible grace in the player, and render the diversion infinitely more entertaining, than it is at present. For indeed action is the business of the stage, and an error is more pardonable on the right, than the wrong side.

There are some actions or gestures, which you must never make use of in Tragedy, any more than in pleading, or sermons, they being low, and fitter for Comedy or burlesque entertainments. Thus you must not put yourself into the posture of one bending a bow, presenting a musket, or playing on any musical instrument, as if you had it in your hands.

You must never imitate any lewd, obscene or indecent postures, let your discourse be on the debauch-

eries of the age, or any thing of that nature, which the description of an Anthony and Verres might require our discourse of.

When you speak in a Prosopopæia, a figure by which you introduce any thing or person speaking, you must be sure to use such actions only, as are proper for the character you speak for. I cannot remember at present one in Tragedy; but in Comedy, Melantha, when she speaks for a man, and answers him in her own person, may give you some image of it. But these seldom happen in plays, and in orations not very frequently.

Thus I have gone through the art of action or gesture, which though I have directed it chiefly for the stage, and there principally for Tragedy, yet the Bar, and the Pulpit may learn some lessons from what I have said, that would be of use to make their pleading and sermons of more force and grace. But, I think, the Pulpit chiefly has need of this doctrine, because that converses more with the passions, than the Bar, and treats of more sublime subjects, meritorious of all the beauty and solemnity of action. I am persuaded, that if our clergy would apply themselves more to this art, what they preach would be more efficacious, and themselves more respected; nay, have a greater awe on their auditors. But then it must be confessed, it is next to impossible for them to attain this perfection, while that custom prevails of reading of sermons, which no clergy in the world do but those of the church of England. For while they read they are not perfect enough in what they deliver, to give

it its proper action and emphasis, either in pronunciation or gesture. But the *Tatler* has handled this particular very well; and if what he has said will have no influence upon them, it will be much in vain for me to attempt it.

The Comedians, I fear may take it amiss, that I have had little or no regard to them in these rules. But, I must confess though I have attempted two or three comical parts, which the indulgence of the town to an old fellow has given me some applause for; yet Tragedy is, and has always been, my delight. Besides, as some have observed, that Comedy is less difficult in the writing; so I am apt to believe, it is much easier in the acting; not that a good Comedian is to be made by every one that attempts it, but we have had, almost ever since I knew the stage, more and better Comedians, than Tragedians; as we have better Comedies than Tragedies written in our language, as the critics and knowing judges tell us. But being willing to raise Tragedies from their present neglect, to the esteem they had in the most polite nation that ever Europe knew, I have endeavoured to contribute my part towards the improving of the representation, which has a mighty influence on the success and esteem of any thing of this nature.

We will now proceed to the other duty of a player, which is the art of speaking; which, though much the least considerable, yet, according to our modern Tragedies, I mean those which have been best received, is of most use. For those poets have very erroneously applied themselves to write more

what requires just speaking, than just acting. Our players, generally speaking, fall very much short of that excellence, even in this which they ought to aim or arrive at; which but too plainly proves what Roseneraus describes—*An airy of children, little yases, they cry out on the top of the question, and are most tyrannically clapt for't; these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages (so they call 'em) that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose quills, and dare scarce come thither.* And though what I have before quoted from Hamlet (in this account of the actor's action and behaviour) does happily express the soul and art of acting, which Shakespeare has drawn, the complete art of gesture in miniature, in the quoted speech, yet all the directions which he gives, relate (except one line) wholly to speaking.

Hamlet. "Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it, trippingly on the tongue. But if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lieve the town crier had spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently: *For in the very torrent, tempest, and I may say the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness.* Oh! it offends me to the soul, to see a robustuous, perriwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise. I could have such a fellow whipt for o'erdoing Termagant: It out-Herod's Herod. Pray you avoid it. Be not too tame neither,

but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the *action* to the *word*, the *word* to the *action*, with this special observance, that you o'er top not the modesty of *nature*. For any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold as 'twere the mirror up to *nature;* to shew virtue her own feature; scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of which *one*, must in your allowance o'er sway a *whole Theatre* of others. Oh! there be players, that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, (not to speak it profanely) that neither having the accent of Christians, nor the gait of Christian, Pagan, or Norman, have so strutted and bellow'd, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

Player. "I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

Ham. "Oh! reform it altogether. And let those who play the clowns, speak no more than is set down for 'em; for there be of them, who will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered; that's villainous, and shews a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it."

If we should consider and weigh these directions

well I am persuaded they are sufficient to instruct a young player in all the beauties of utterance and to correct all the errors he might, for want of the art of speaking have incurred. By pronouncing it *trippingly on the tongue,* he means a clear and disembarrassed pronunciation, such as is agreeable to nature and the subject on which he speaks, his telling the actor, that he had as lieve the town-crier should speak his lines, as one that mouth'd them, is very just; for if noise were an excellence, I know not who would bear away the palm, the *crier,* or the player; I am sure the town-crier would be less faulty; his business requiring noise. *Nor do not saw the air with your hand thus,* but *use all gently.* This is the only precept of action, which is extremely just, and agreeable to the ideas of all, that I have met with on my full inquiry among my learned friends, who have read all that has been wrote upon action, and who reckon *rude* and *boisterous* gestures among the faulty. Art always directing a moderate and gentle motion, which Shakespeare expresses by *use all gently.* Besides this *sawing of the air,* expresses one who is very much at a loss how to dispose of his hands, but knowing that they should have some motion, gives them an aukward violence. The next observation is extremely masterly.——*For in the very torrent, tempest, and I may say the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and get a temperance, that may give it smoothness.* I remember, among many, an instance in the madness of Alexander the Great, in Lee's play, Mr. Goodman always went through it with all the

force the part required, and yet made not half the noise as some who succeeded him; who were sure to bellow it out in such a manner, that their voice would fail them before the end, and lead them to such a languid and ennervate hoarseness, as entirely wanted that agreeable *smoothness*, which Shakespeare requires, and which is the perfection of beautiful speaking; for to have a just heat, and loudness, and yet a *smoothness*, is all that can be desired. *O! it offends me to the soul*, he goes on. Methinks some of our young gentlemen, who value themselves for great players, nay, and judges too of the drama, set up for critics, and who censure and receive or reject plays, should be ashamed of themselves, when they read this in Shakespeare, of whose authority they seem so fond on other occasions.

CHAP. VII.

Some farther Memoirs of Nell Guyn.

Ellen Guyn, or Quin,* as A. Wood calls her, was born of obscure parents; and, as it is written by the author of her life, was at first no better than a cinder-girl; but that she sold oranges, when first taken notice of, is generally agreed on; and then one Mr. Duncan, a merchant, taking a fancy to her smart wit, fine shape, and foot, the least of any woman's in

* Fasti. Vol. 2, p. 154. See Capt. Smith's Court of Venus, 8vo. 1716, Vol. 1, in her Life.

in England, kept her about two years, then recommended her into the King's play house, where she became an actress in great vogue, and mistress both to old Lacy and young Hart, two famous players at that time. In a satire ascribed to Lord Rochester,* her first employment is said to be selling of herrings; next was exposed by Madam Ross, a noted procuress, to those who would give half a crown; lastly took her degrees in the play house; where, it is reported, this Lord himself, as also the Duke of Buckingham, paid their addresses to her. She is mentioned to have come into the royal company of Comedians in Drury Lane, a few years after the first opening of that house, in 1663. † And the parts she acted in some of Mr. Dryden's plays, Sir Robert Howard's, and the Earl of Orrery's, are also distinguished. At length, by her fine dancing, she is said to have won her sovereign's heart, and so rose to be one of his principal ladies of pleasure, in spite of all the charms which Cleveland, Portsmouth, or Miss Davis could exert. There are many comical passages reported of Nell Guyn: she being of a gay, frolicksome and humourous disposition; but some are a little too loose, and others a little too long to be here inserted. This story may however perhaps be excused: That having once by an unlucky run of ill luck at gaming, lost all her money, and run in debt with Sir John

* State Poems, Vol. 2, p. 193.

† See J. Downes's Roscius Anglican, or History of the Stage, 8vo. 1708, p. 2.

Germain, he took the advantage for making such a proposal for the easy payment thereof, as may be well guessed at, by her answer, when she replied, with equal smartness and fidelity to her royal keeper, *That truly, she was no such sportswoman, as to lay the dog where the deer should lie.* *Many sharp satires were written on her; rather through envy at her sudden advancement from such a mean origin, than any unworthiness in her of the station to which she was advanced. One therefore is ascribed to Sir George Etheredge, in Dryden's Miscellanies; of which some use has here been made. And the Lord Shaftesbury has this reflection, in his speech Anno 1680, upon the King's concubines in general. "A "wise Prince, when he hath need of his people, will "rather part with his family and Counsellors, than "displease his friends for them. This noble Lord "near me, hath found fault with that precedent which "he said I offered to your Lordships concerning the "chargeable ladies at court. I remember no such "thing I said; but if I must speak of them, I shall "say, as the Prophet did to King Saul—*What means "the bleating of this kind of cattle?* And I hope the "King will make the same kind of answer—*That he "preserves them from sacrifice;* and means to de- "liver them up to please the people. For there "must be a change; we must neither have Popish "favourites, nor Popish mistresses, nor Popish coun-

* See the Duke of Norfolk's charge against Mary his Duchess, for adultery with Sir J. Germain, with the Duchess's answer, Fol. 1692.

"cillors at court; nor any new convert. What I "spoke was about another lady, that belongs not to "the court; but like Sempronia in conspiracy, Cat- "aline's does more mischief than Cethegus."* Yet that any of this was meant least against Nell Guyn, is manifest; for she troubled not her head with religion, and was no Popish mistress; nor with politics, and did no mischief. And though she might be alike chargeable with the rest to his Majesty, nevertheless, as she had more spirit, wit, and pleasantry; so had she more justice, charity, and generosity in her, than all the King's other mistresses. The haughty and imperious air, she left to them; hers was free and degagee; which rendered her more amiable because less awful. There is a picture of her in being, which was taken by Sir Peter Lely; but one copy of it in Mezzotinto, does not express that agreeable vivacity which brightened every feature. His Majesty had issue by her, Charles, sirnamed Beauclerc;† born about the middle of May, 1670, who was created Earl of Burford, and afterwards Duke of St. Albans; for whose use, his mother is said to have bought Col. Richard Ingoldby's estate, at Lethenborough, in Buckinghamshire.‡ She had also by his Majesty another son, named James, born about Christmas day, 1671, who died in France about Michlemas, 1680. As for herself, she died at her house in Pall

* Capt. Smith's Court of Venus, &c. as above.

† Dugdale's Baron, and Athen. Oxon. in Fasti. V. 2, Fol. 154.

‡ Athen. Oxon. in Fasti. Vol. 77.

Mall, in 1691, and was pompously interred in the Parish Church of St. Martin's in the Fields, where Dr. Thomas Tenison, then Vicar thereof (and late Archbishop of Canterbury) preached her funeral sermon, or a panegyric rather, upon her and her profession, as some thought it, giving a more mild and favourable character of such a woman than was then deemed to become his cloth. This sermon the Earl of Jersey, who wanted to prefer Dr. Scott, of St. Gile's, objected to Queen Mary, against her preferring Dr. Tenison to the See of Lincoln; which, a few weeks after he preached it, became vacant by the death of Dr. Thomas Barlow; and had probably lost it him, had not her Majesty conceived a very steady opinion of his deserts; when she answered—*It was a sign that this poor unfortunate woman died penitent; for if I can read a man's heart through his looks, had she not made a truly pious and Christian end, the Doctor could never have been induced to speak well of her.** Among her donations, one was, a sum of money for a weekly entertainment of the ringers at St. Martin's aforesaid; which they enjoy to this day. There is a pamphlet, entitled, An account of the Tragedy of old Madam Quyn, drowned near the Neat Houses, printed in Quarto, 1679. Whether the mother or any other relation of Nell Guyn, I know not.

We shall conclude this chapter with the following letter.

* The life of Dr. Tenison, octavo p. 20.

To the Author of the History of the Stage.

SIR,

That excellent actor, Mr. Edward Kynaston, was well descended.

The Kynastons were anciently possessed of a genteel estate at Oteley in Shropshire.

Mr. Kynaston, to whom we have more immediate relation, acquired a handsome fortune by the stage. He left an only son, whom he bred a mercer. He lived in Covent Garden, greatly improved his patrimony, and in that parish both father and son lie interred.

Mr. Kynaston, the mercer, left likewise an only son, whom he bred a clergyman, who by means of his father's dying intestate, and a lucky marriage, was enabled to purchase the impropriation of Aldgate.

He looks upon himself as the top of his family, and therefore thinks it beneath him to give any account of it. But,

> Survey the Globe, and ev'ry where you'll find,
> *Pride* and *Prunella* both in one conjoin'd.

You may, sir, depend on the truth of these particulars. I am, &c.

PHILALETHES.

Will's Coffee House, Aug. 1, 1736.

CHAP. VIII.

The opening of the new Theatre in the Hay-Market. Death of Mr. Betterton and Miss Barry.

We now come to give an account of another stage revolution, which is the removal of the Lincoln's-Inn-Fields Company to a new Theatre erected for them in the Hay-Market, which was opened 1705, with the following Prologue, written by Sir Samuel Garth, and spoken by Miss Bracegirdle.

Such was our builder's art, that soon as nam'd,
This fabric, like the infant world, was fram'd.
The Architect must on dull order wait,
But 'tis the Poet only can create.*
None else, at pleasure, can duration give;
When marble fails, the Muses structures live.
The Cyprian fane is now no longer seen,
Tho' sacred to the name of love's fair Queen.
Ev'n Athens scarce in pompous ruin stands,
Tho' finish'd by the learn'd Minerva's hands.†
More sure presages from these walls we find,
By beauty founded, and by wit design'd.
In the good age of ghostly ignorance,
How did Cathedrals rise, and zeal advance!
The merry Monks said orisons at ease;
Large were their meals, and light their penances.
Pardon for sins was purchas'd with estates,
And none but Rogues in rags dy'd reprobates.

* The builder of this fabric Sir John Vanburgh, was both Poet and Architect.

† Lady Harriot Godolphin, one of the Duke of Marlborough's daughters.

But now that pious pageantry's no more,
And stages thrive, as churches did before.
Your own magnificence you here survey,
Majestic columns stand, where dunghills lay,
And cars triumphal rise from carts of hay.
Swains here are taught to hope, and Nymphs to fear,
And big Almanzor's fight,* mock—Blenheim's here.
Descending goddesses adorn our scenes,
And quit their bright abodes, for gilt machines.
Shou'd Jove for this fair circle, leave his throne,
He'd meet a lightning fiercer than his own.
Tho' to the Sun his tow'ring eagles rise,
They scarce could bear the lustre of these eyes.

Though the revolters seemed to set up their standard here with great satisfaction, and continued their residence for about four years, yet it was but in a kind of fluctuating state; for several of them were frequently deserting from one company to another, backwards and forwards from each of the subsisting Theatres.

To repair some very great losses, which Mr. Betterton had sustained, in the years 1706, 1707, and 1708 successively, on Thursday the 7th of April, 1709, the celebrated Comedy of *Love for Love*, was acted at Drury-lane Theatre for his benefit. Those excellent players Miss Barry, Miss Bracegirdle, and Mr. Dogget, (then not concerned in the house) acted on this occasion. There had not been known so great a concourse of persons of distinction, as at that time; the stage itself was covered with gentlemen

* Almanzor and Almatide, characters in Mr. Dryden's *Conquest of Grenada.*

and ladies, and when the curtain was drawn up, it discovered even there a very splendid audience.—This unusual encouragement, which was given to a play, for the advantage of so great an actor, gave an undeniable instance, that the true relish for manly entertainment and rational pleasures was not then wholly lost. All the parts were acted to perfection; the actors were careful of their carriage, and no one was guilty of the affectation to insert witticisms of his own, but a due respect was had to the audience, for encouraging this admirable player. It was not then doubted but plays would revive, and take their usual place in the opinion of persons of wit and merit, and not degenerate into an apostacy in favour of *dress* and *sound*.

We must not omit to observe farther, that a Prologue written by Mr. Congreve was, on this occasion, spoken by Miss Bracegirdle; and an Epilogue, written by Mr. Rowe, was spoken by Miss Barry. The former the public were not obliged with, but the latter was printed and dispersed in the house the very night it was spoken. It was as follows.

As some brave Knight who once with spear and shield,
Had sought renown in many a well fought field,
But now no more with sacred fame inspir'd,
Was to a peaceful hermitage retir'd;
There, if by chance disast'rous tales he hears,
Of Matrons wrongs and captive Virgins tears,
He feels soft pity urge his gen'rous breast,
And vows once more to succour the distrest;
Buckled in mail he sallies on the plain,
And turns him to the feats of arms again.

So we, to former leagues of friendship true,
Have bid once more our peaceful homes adieu,
To aid old Thomas,* and to pleasure you.
Like errant damsels boldly we engage,
Arm'd, as you see, for the defenceless stage.
Time was, when this good *man* no help did lack,
And scorn'd that any *she* should hold his back.
But now, so age and frailty have ordain'd,
By two at once he's fore'd to be sustain'd.†
You see, what failing nature brings man to,
And yet let none insult; for aught we know,
She may not wear so well with some of you:
Tho' old, you find his strength is not clean past,
But true as steel, he's mettle to the last.
If better he perform'd in days of yore,
Yet now he gives you all that's in his pow'r;
What can the youngest of you all do more?
What he has been, tho' present praise be dumb,
Shall haply be a theme in times to come,
As now we talk of Roscius and of Rome.
Had you withheld your favours on this night,
Old Shakespeare's ghost had ris'n to do him right:
With indignation had you seen him frown,
Upon a worthless, witless, tasteless town;
Griev'd and repining you had heard him say,
Why are my famous labours cast away?
Why did I only write, what only he could play?
But since like friends to wit, thus throng'd you meet,
Go on and make the gen'rous work complete;
Be true to merit, and still own his cause,
Find something for him more than bare applause.
In just remembrance of your pleasures past,
Be kind, and give him a discharge at last.
In peace and ease life's remnant let him wear,
And hang his consecrated buskin here.

† Thomas Betterton.

* Miss Barry stood on his right, and Miss Bracegirdle on his left hand.

In the month of September following, Mr. Betterton performed the part of Hamlet; and in him every spectator beheld the force of action in perfection. He behaved himself so well, that though above seventy, he acted youth; and by the prevalent power of proper manner, gesture, and voice, appeared thro' the whole Drama a young man of great expectation, vivacity, and enterprise. The soliloquy where he began the celebrated sentence of *To be, or not to be;* the expostulation where he explains with his mother in her closet; the noble ardour, after seeing his father's Ghost, and his generous distress for the death of Ophelia; are each of them circumstances which dwell strongly upon the minds of the audience, and would certainly affect their behaviour on any parallel occasions in their own lives.

Such were the proper ornaments, with which this great man represented virtue on the stage.

But yet the indolent, emasculating sing-song of Italy, had gained so much ground in England, that Mr. Betterton, weary of the fatigues and toil of theatrical government, delivered his company over to Mr. Vanbrugh's new licence. But they again giving way to the Operas, the companies were once more united in Drury Lane, and the Operas confined to the Hay-Market. However, revolutions became so frequent in this Dramatic state, that Mr. Swinny got the chief players over to him and the Opera House; among whom was Mr. Betterton, who being very much afflicted with the gout, acted but seldom; yet at this juncture, upon the separation of the houses,

when musical performances were confined to one theatre, and Dramatic to the other, *The British Enchanters, or No Magic Like Love*, written by Lord Lansdowne, was brought on at the Queen's theatre in the Hay-Market, 1710. Among the Dramatis Personæ of this truly polite English Opera, were, men, Mr. Betterton, Mr. Booth, Mr. Verbruggen, &c. women, Miss Barry, Miss Bracegirdle, Miss Porter, &c.

The sole design of this excellent performance was a portraiture of the virtues of the immortal Queen Anne. The last scene of it, represented the Queen, and all the triumphs of her Majesty's reign.

Surveying round her, with impartial eyes,
Whom to protect, or whom she should chastise.
In ev'ry line of her auspicious face,
Soft mercy smil'd, adorn'd with ev'ry grace.
Sure hope of all who dire oppression bear,
For all th' oppress'd become her instant care.
Nations, of conquest proud, she tam'd to free,
Denouncing war, presenting liberty;
The victor to the vanquish'd yields a prize,
For in her triumph, their redemption lies.
Freedom and peace for ravish'd fame she gave;
Invades to bless, and conquers but to save.
So the sun scorches, and revives by turns,
Requiting with rich metals, where he burns.
Taught by this great example to be just,
Succeeding Kings shall well fulfill their trust;
Discord and war, and tyranny shall cease,
And jarring nations be compelled to peace;
Princes and states, like subjects, shall agree,
To trust her power, safe in her piety.

Great Britain's glory was this royal dame,
From Stuart's race she rose, and Anne was her name.

The chief performers in this Opera, from their deserts, justly gained universal applause; but the same year of its representation, deprived the world of Mr. Betterton, who died shortly after. His true character follows :*

"Such an actor as Mr. Betterton ought to be recorded with the same respect as Roscius among the Romans. The greatest orator has thought fit to quote his judgment, and celebrate his life. Roscius was the example to all that would form themselves into proper and winning behaviour. His action was so well adapted to the sentiments he expressed that the youth of Rome thought they wanted only to be virtuous to be as graceful in their appearance as Roscius. The imagination took a lively impression of what was great and good; and they who never thought of setting up for the art of imitation, became themselves inimitable characters.

"There is no human invention so aptly calculated for the forming a free-born people as that of a theatre. Tully reports, that the celebrated player of whom I am speaking, used frequently to say, *The perfection of an actor is only to become what he is doing*. Young men, who are too inattentive to receive lectures, are irresistibly taken with performances. Hence it is, that I extremely lament the little relish the gentry of this nation have at present for the just

* See the Tatler, No. 167.

and noble representations in some of our tragedies. The Operas, which are of late introduced, can leave no trace behind them that can be of service beyond the present moment. To sing and to dance are accomplishments very few have any thoughts of practising; but to speak justly and move gracefully, is what every man thinks he does peform, or wishes he did.

"I can hardly think, that any performer of antiquity could surpass the action of Mr. Betterton in any of the occasions in which he has appeared on our stage. The wonderful agony which he appeared in, when he examined the circumstance of the handkerchief in Othello; the mixture of love that intruded upon his mind upon the innocent answers Desdemona makes, betrayed in his gesture such a variety and vicissitude of passions, as would admonish a man to be afraid of his own heart, and perfectly convince him, that it is to stab it, to admit that worst of daggers, jealousy. Whoever reads in his closet this admirable scene, will find that he cannot, except he has as warm an imagination as Shakespeare himself, find any but dry, incoherent and broken sentences; but a reader that has seen Betterton act it, observes there could not be a word added; that longer speeches had been unnatural, nay, impossible, in Othello's circumstances. The charming passage in the same tragedy, where he tells the manner of winning the affection of his mistress, was urged with so moving and graceful an energy, that while I walked in the cloisters, I thought of him with the

same concern as if I waited for the remains of a person who had in real life done all that I had seen him represent. The gloom of the place, and faint lights before the ceremony appeared, contributed to the melancholy disposition I was in; and I began to be extremely afflicted, that Brutus and Cassius had any difference; that Hotspur's gallantry was so unfortunate; and that the mirth and good humour of Falstaff could not exempt him from the grave. Nay, this occasion in me, who look upon the distinctions among men to be merely scenical, raised reflections upon the emptiness of all human perfection and greatness in general; and I could not but regret, that the sacred heads which lie buried in the neighbourhood of this little portion of earth in which my poor old friend is deposited, are returned to dust as well as he, and that there is no difference in the grave between the imaginary and real monarch. This made me say of human life itself with Macbeth:

> To-morrow, to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in a stealing pace from day to day,
> To the last moment of recording time!
> And all your yesterdays have lighted fools
> To the eternal night! Out, out brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more.

Mr. Betterton was interred in the cloister of Westminster Abbey.

We are now to return to Miss Barry, who did not long survive him; for she found such an inward de-

cay, that she was obliged to quit the stage above seven years before she died, which was on the 7th day of November, 1713. She was interred at Acton, in the county of Middlesex. She had a daughter by the celebrated John Earl of Rochester, who by Will 1680, left her an annuity of 40*l.* per annum. She died at about thirteen years of age, and lies interred at the same place. The love letters which we have in print by his Lordship, were all written to Miss Barry; the first of them opens thus:

MADAM,

"So much wit and beauty as you have, should think of nothing less than doing miracles; and there cannot be a greater, than to continue to love me: Affecting every thing is mean, as loving pleasure, and being fond, where you find merit; but to pick out the wildest, and most fantastical, odd man, alive, and to place your kindness there, is an act so brave and daring, as will show the greatness of your spirit, and distinguish you in love, as you are in all things else, from womankind."

On her being brought to bed he thus compliments her:

"Your safe delivery has delivered me too from fears for your sake, which were, I'll promise you, as burdensome to me, as your delicate situation could be to you. Every thing has fallen out to my wish, for you are out of danger, and the child is of the soft sex I love."

This daughter was christened by her mother's

name, Elizabeth; and he thus, in another letter, expresses himself:

"I love Betty so well, that you need not apprehend any neglect from those I employ; and I hope very shortly to restore her to you a finer girl than ever."

The whole course of his Lordship's letters to Miss Barry, are so elegantly polite, that every reader must be charmed with them. They were subjoined to the collection of his Poems, which contains the Tragedy of Valentinian, 12mo. 1714.

In the Church Yard of Acton, is the following Memorial for Miss Barry.

Near this place
Lies the body of Elizabeth Barry,
Of the Parish of St. Mary Le Savoy,
Who departed this life the 7th of Nov. 1713.
Aged 55 years.

Memoirs of Mr. Wilks.

Mr. Wilks was descended from a very good family in Warwickshire, in which county all his predecessors were born. His father, Edward Wilks Esq. was obliged to leave England through misfortunes, and some friends he had in Ireland procured him the post of being one of the Pursuivants to the Lord Lieutenant of that kingdom. He had three sons, Edward, Robert, and William. The second of which, our late excellent Comedian, was born at a little vil-

lage called Rathfarnam, near Dublin, 1665. He was bred up under Mr. Secretary Southwell, and had for some years a seat in his office; being an excellent clerk, and wrote a fine hand. Upon the breaking out of King James's wars in Ireland, Mr. Wilks was forced into the army by Capt. Bourk, and was exempted from military duty, being made clerk to the camp. But the natural propensity of his genius was wholly turned towards the stage; and hearing so much of the just praises of Mr. Betterton's merit, he was not easy till he came over, and privately by a stratagem escaped from his military clerkship.

At his arrival in England, he was indeed entertained by Mr. Christopher Rich; but on no higher terms than fifteen shillings per week, out of which he was to allow ten shillings per month for learning to dance.

Mr. Harris was the master of whom he learnt; and at whose school, after Mr. Wilks had been above a year in England, he saw a young gentlewoman of about twenty years of age, with whom he fell in love. This was Miss Elizabeth Knapton, youngest daughter of Ferdinando Knapton, Esq. Town Clerk of Southampton, and steward of the new forest. In due time she brought Mr. Wilks a son, who was christened Robert. The child was put to nurse, and committed to the guardianship of Mr. Bowen the player, upon Mr. Wilks' return to Ireland, who took his wife with him, upon the following occasion:

Mr. Ashbury, master of the Dublin Theatre, com-

ing over to recruit his stage, Mr. Betterton thinking Mr. Rich did not give Mr. Wilks sufficient encouragement, especially since he had now an increasing family to provide for, earnestly recommended Mr. Wilks to Mr. Ashbury, as a young man of very growing hopes, and deserving of favours. From this character given of him, Mr. Ashbury contracted with Wilks for 50*l.* a year certain, and a benefit play. Upon these terms was Mr. Rich deprived of Mr. Wilks. But it was not long before he was made sensible of his loss, and forced to send a special messenger to Ireland to regain him. The person deputed to go was Mr. Swinney, who with great privacy got Mr. Wilks and his wife back, after contracting to allow him 4*l.* per week; the Duke of Ormond having issued a warrant that Mr. Wilks should not depart the kingdom, so much was he beloved in Ireland. However, Mr. Rich was rightly served; and Mr. Wilks but justly rewarded.

Upon this, Mr. Wilks' dear friend Mr. Farquhar left the Irish stage, and came over with him, which was owing to a melancholy accident.

Mr. Farquhar was also extremely beloved in Ireland, and had indeed the advantage of a very good person, though his voice was weak; but as he never met with the least repulse from the audience in any of his performances, he was resolved to continue on the stage, till something better should offer; but this resolution was soon broke by an accident.

Mr. Farquhar being to play the part of Guyomar, in the *Indian Emperor*, who kills Vasquez, one of

the Spanish Generals, and forgetting to exchange his sword for a foil in the engagement, he wounded his brother tragedian, who acted Vasquez, very dangerously; and though it proved not mortal, yet it so shocked the natural tenderness of Mr. Farquhar's temper, that it put a period to his acting ever after. But in a short time the Earl of Orrery, in regard to his particular merit, gave him a lieutenancy in his regiment then in Ireland.

Mr. Wilks, well knowing the abilities of Mr. Farquhar, after their arrival in England, he never ceased his importunities with him, till he had prevailed on him to write a play; assuring him that he would gain much more reputation by writing for the stage, than appearing on it.

The King, in the *Island Princess,* was the first part Mr. Wilkes played at his return to England upon which occasion he thus addressed the audience.

As a poor stranger wreck'd upon the coast,
With fear and wonder views the dangers past;
So I, with dreadful apprehension stand,
And thank those pow'rs that brought me safe to land.
With joy I view the smiling country o'er,
And find, kind heav'ns! an hospitable shore.
'Tis England———this your charities declare
But more the charms to British beauties there:
Beauties that celebrate this Isle afar,
They by their smiles, as much as you by war
True love, true honour, I can't fail to play,
Such lively patterns you before me lay.
Void of offence, tho' not from censure free,
I left a distant Isle too kind to me;

Loaded with favours I was fore'd away,
Unwilling to accept, and ne'er cou'd pay.
There I cou'd please; but here my fame must end,
For hither none must come to boast, but mend.
Improvement must be great, since here I find
Precepts, examples, and my masters kind.*

In the year 1698, Mr. Farquhar, having taken Mr. Wilks' advice, had a Comedy brought upon the stage, called *Love and a Bottle*. To which there was a very humorous Prologue and Epilogue, both written by Jo. Haynes, the latter spoken by him in mourning. Mr. Wilks had not any part in this play; but Miss Rogers (of whom more hereafter) acted Lucinda, a lady of considerable fortune, and Mr. Mills Lovewell, her gallant.

About this time the English Theatre was not only pestered with tumblers, and rope-dances from France, but likewise dancing masters, and dancing dogs; shoals of Italian squallers were daily imported and the Drury-lane company almost broke. Upon this occasion it was, that the facetious Jo. Haynes composed this Epilogue, and spoke it in mourning.

I come not here your Poet's fate to see,
He, and his play, may both be damn'd for me;
No, *Royal Theatre*, I come to *mourn* for *thee*.
And must *these structures* then untimely fall,
While t'other house stands, and gets the devil and all?
Must still *kind fortune* thro' all weathers steer 'em,
And beauties bloom there, 'spite of *Edax Rerum?*
Vivitur Ingenio; that curst motto there,

* These verses were by Mr. Farquhar.

Sedne'd me first to be a wicked player:*
Hard times indeed; *O tempora! O mores!*
I know that stage must down, where not *one* whore is.
But can ye have the hearts tho'—pray now speak,
After all these services, to let us break?
Ye cannot do't, unless the devil's in ye:
What art, what merit, ha'n't we us'd to win ye?
First, to divert ye with some new French strollers,
We brought ye *Bona Seres Barba Colers.*†
When their male throats no longer drew your money,
We got y' an Eunuch Pipe, Signior Rompony.
That beardless songster we cou'd ne'er make much on,
The females spi'd a blotch within his scutcheon.‡
An Italian now we've got of mighty fame,
Don Sigismondo Fideli—there's music in his name:
His voice is like the music of the spheres;
It shou'd be heav'nly for the price it bears.§
He's a handsome fellow too, looks brisk and trim,
If *he* don't take you, then the devil take him.
Besides, lest our white faces mayn't always delight ye,
We've pick'd up Gipsies now, to please, or fright ye.
Lastly, to make our house more courtly shine,
As *travel* does the *man of mode* refine;
To mend the manners and course English feeding,
They went to Ireland, to improve their breeding:
Yet for all this, we still are at a loss—
O Collier, Collier, thou'st frighted away Miss Cross.
She, to return our foreigners complaisance,
At Cupid's call, has made a trip to France.
Love's fire-arms here are since not worth a sous;
We've lost the prettiest jewel of our house.
Losing that jewel gave us a fatal blow:
Well, if thin audiences must Jo. Haynes undo!

* Looks up at the motto over the stage in Drury Lane.
† Mimicks French Singing. ‡ Term of Heraldry.
§ Twenty pounds per night.

Well, if 'tis decreed, nor can thy fate, O stage!
Resist the fate of this obdurate age,
I'll then grow wiser, leave off playing the fool,
And hire this play house for a Boarding school.
D'ye think the maids won't be in a sweet condition,
When they're under Jo. Haynes grave tuition;
They'll have no occasion then, I'm sure to play,
They'll have such *comings-in* another way.

This Epilogue was many times spoken with universal applause, not only to this, but several other plays, as a just rebuke of the vitiated taste of the town. And it might now be revived with the greatest justice, in opposition to our present polite taste, when nothing will go down but ballad-operas and Mr. Lun's buffoonery. Such are our stage entertainments; and what we are still to expect from the theatres of Bow Street and Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Mr. Haynes's lash on the Drury Lane actors, who went to Ireland to learn breeding, was levelled at those that accompanied Mr. Wilks back, with Mr. Ashbury, on the occasion before mentioned, and a very just one, want of encouragement.

Mr. Wilks's son Robert, whom he left under the care of Mr. Bowen, as has been mentioned, died an infant. He had nine more children, who underwent the same untimely fate, but one daughter, whose name was Frances, lived to be married to Capt. Price, in the eighteenth year of her age. She unhappily died of the small pox, at her father-in-law's house, at Tiptry, near Colchester, in Essex, before she was twenty, And in one and the same year, Mr. Wilks

had the misfortune to lose both his wife, and his only child.

Mrs. Wilks was buried in the Parish Church of St. Paul, Covent Garden. There is erected to her deserving memory, a very handsome monument, whereon is the underwritten inscription.

Beneath this Marble,
Lies Elizabeth Wilks, late wife of Robert Wilks,
Of this Parish, Gent.
The purity of her mind,
Which appeared in all the duties of a virtuous life,
Made her a good Wife,
Daughter, Mother and Friend,
Her affection was, like her piety,
Constant, as unfeigned, to her last moment.
In memory of her virtues,
This was erected by her husband.
She died the 21st day of March, 1713—14,
In the 42d year of her age.

Mr. Wilks was a second time married to Mrs. Mary Fell, relict of Charles Fell, Esq. of Swartmore, in Lancashire, whom, suitable to her deserts, he constituted his sole Executrix.

This excellent Comedian died at his own house, in Bow Street, Covent Garden, on the 27th day of September, 1732, and was very genteelly interred at his Parish Church, on the fourth day of October. Here follows a true copy of his last Will and Testament.

A true copy of the last Will and Testament of Robert Wilks, Esq.

In the name of God, Amen, I Robert Wilks, of the Parish,of St. Paul, Covent Garden, in the county of Middlesex, Gent. being sound and perfect in my mind and memory, and therefore willing at this time to dispose my affairs in the best and most prudent manner I am able, do make and constitute this my last Will and Testament, in manner and form following.

First, I resign my soul to Almighty God my Creator, and hope, through his mercy, forgiveness of my sins and eternal life. I commit my body to the earth, and desire it may be decently interred at the discretion of my executrix herein after named. And as to all the worldly estate of which I shall die possessed, I dispose the same in manner following.

Imprimis, I will that all my debts and funeral expences shall be fully paid and satisfied by my Executrix herein after named.

Item, I do hereby give, devise, and bequeath all my right, title, and interest in the Patent, granted by his present Majesty King George the second, to Robert Wilks, Colley Cibber, and Barton Booth, their Executors, Administrators, and Assigns, for the term of one and twenty years, to commence from the first day of September, 1732, to my dear wife Mary Wilks.

And I do likewise give, devise, and bequeath, my house, situate in Bow Street, Covent Garden, wherein I now dwell, together with the Back house, Brew house, Laundry, and all the appurtenances thereunto

belonging, with all my right, title, and interest therein; and also all my household goods and furniture, of what nature or kind soever; and also all my jewels, plate, linen, bedding, and personal estate whatsoever, to my dear wife Mary Wilks. And I do hereby recommend it to my said wife, to leave to my daughter-in-law Mary Frances Shaw (if she be living at the time of her decease) such part of what I have hereby given and bequeathed unto my said wife, as she shall think fitting.

And lastly, I do hereby nominate, constitute, and appoint my said dear wife, Mary Wilks, sole Executrix of this my last Will and Testament, written with my own hand.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, in the sight and presence of three witnesses, whose names are hereunto subscribed, this 30th day of May, in the year of our Lord 1732.

ROBERT WILKS.

Signed, sealed, and published by the said Robert Wilks, the Testator, as his last Will and Testament, in the sight and presence of us whose hands are hereunder written, and who signed our hands as witnesses to the same, in the sight and presence of the Testator.

Jo. Birkhead, sen.
D. Birkhead, jr.
Wm. Hemming.

Mr. Henry Norris,

Commonly called Jubilee Dicky for his excellent performance in Mr. Farquhar's *Trip to the Jubilee,*

was born in Salisbury Court, Fleet Street, 1665. His mother was the first woman who ever appeared on the stage as an actress; for, till some time after the restoration of King Charles II. the women's parts were performed by men, among whom the celebrated Mr. Kynaston made a very fine lady, and occasioned a very good jest. His Majesty being at a representation of Hamlet, and thinking the entry of the Queen, in that play, a little too tedious, one of the actors most humbly acquainted the audience that the Queen* *was not quite shaved.*

Mr. Norris became brother-in-law to Mr. Wilks, by marrying Miss Sarah Knapton, his wife's sister.

Memoirs of Mr. Booth.

Barton Booth, Esq. was very well descended, and nearly related to the Earl of Warrington; nay, he has assured me that his family always looked upon themselves as the eldest branch of the house of Booth. This excellent Tragedian was the son of John Booth, Esq. born 1681.

Lancashire was the county of his nativity, from whence his father, with his whole family, removed to town, and settled at Westminster, 1684. Mr. Booth, the youngest of three sons, was, at nine years of age, put under the tuition of the celebrated Dr. Busby, under whom he became an excellent scholar. He showed, while at school, his great inclination to poetry; and was very fond of repeating poetical per-

* Mr. Kynaston then played the Queen.

formances and parts of plays, in all which he discovered a very promising genius for the stage. But Mr. Booth's first encouragement in acting came from his master, at the rehearsal of a Latin play, in which he performed with general applause.

The following part of a Prologue was spoken at Westminster school, which will evidently discover their high esteem for Mr. Booth, as an actor.

Your antique actors, as we read,
No more than anticks were indeed:
With wide mouth'd masks their babes to fright.
They kept the countenance from sight.
Now faces on the stage are shown;
Nor speak they with their tongues alone,
But in each look a force there lies,
That speaks the passion to the eyes.
See then, which best deserves our praise,
The vizard, or the human face?
Old Roscius to *our* Booth must bow;
'Twas then but art, 'tis nature now.

Mr. Booth was at that time designed by his father for orders; but as he had received such early praises of his blooming qualifications for an actor, and that from persons of such importance, it was not to be wondered at, that his inclination led him to the stage; in pursuance of which, and to avoid being sent to the University, he ran away from school at seventeen years old, and went to Ireland, where he entered himself with Mr. Ashbury, manager of the Theatre at Dublin.

He remained there two years, and acquired the reputation of a very good player. He returned to

England in 1701, and applied himself to Lord Fitzharding, a Lord of the bedchamber to Prince George of Denmark. His Lordship recommended him to Mr. Betterton as a very promising genius, who took him under his care, and made him what he was. The part of Maximus in *Valentinian* was chosen for his first appearance. Mr. Verbruggen played Valentinian, Mr. Betterton Etius, and Miss Barry Lucina. There never was more applause expressed by any audience, than was given to Mr. Booth on that occasion.

Soon after he again appeared with universal applause, in the character of Artaban, in the *Ambitious Step-Mother.*

In the year 1704, he married Miss Frances Barkham, second daughter of Sir William Barkham, Bart. of Norfolk, who died in 1710, without issue.

Cato greatly augmented both Mr. Booth's fame and interest, by procuring him the favour of Lord Bolingbroke, then secretary of state, who, within a year after, as a reward for so much singular merit, got him added to the number of the managers, by procuring him a special licence from Queen Anne.

Mr. Booth performed many of Mr. Betterton's parts in such a manner, as demonstrated both tutor and pupil. Mortality deprived us of him May 10, 1733.

A true copy of Mr. Booth's last Will and Testament, drawn up by himself.

Wholly resigned, and submitted to the will of God, I Barton Booth, of the parish of St. Paul, Co-

vent Garden, do make and ordain this my last Will and Testament, as follows.

I bequeath to Christian Hannah, the sum of 5*l.* an old servant to my father.

All and singular my estate, as well real as personal, ready money, bonds, notes, plate, jewels, goods and chattels of what kind or nature soever, I give and bequeath absolutely to my dearest and well beloved wife, Hester Booth,* her heirs, executors, and assigns forever; and I appoint and constitute my said wife, Hester Booth, full and sole Executrix of this my last Will and Testament, hereby revoking and making void all other Wills by me made.

It is my earnest desire to be buried privately, without ostentation, hatchment, escutcheon, &c. in Cowley church near Uxbridge.

As I have been a man much known and talked of, my not leaving legacies to my relations may give occasion to censorious people to reflect upon my conduct in this latter act of my life; therefore I think it necessary to declare, that I have considered my circumstances, and finding, upon a strict examination, that all I am now possessed of, does not amount to two thirds of the fortune my said wife brought me on the day of our marriage, together with the yearly additions and advantages since arising from her laborious employment upon the stage, during twelve years past, I thought myself bound by that honesty, honor,

* Mr. Booth married a second time 1719, the celebrated Miss Santlow. He had no issue by her, but she had some of her own, a daughter of her's being lately married.

and gratitude, due to her constant affection, not to give away any part of the remainder of her fortune at my death, having already bestowed in free gifts upon my sister, Barbara Rogers, upwards of 1300*l.* out of my wife's substance; and full 400*l.* of her money upon my undeserving brother, George Booth, besides the gifts they received before my marriage; and all these benefits were conferred on my said brother and sister, from time to time, at the earnest solicitation of my wife, who was perpetually intreating me to continue the allowances I gave my relations before my marriage. The inhuman return that has been made my wife for these obligations, by my sister, I forbear to mention. Once more renouncing and making void all former Wills, I declare this present Testament to be my true and last Will. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 2d of June, 1731. All written with my own hand. B. Booth.

A character of Mr. Booth, by Aaron Hill, Esq.

Two advantages distinguished him, in the strongest light, from the rest of his fraternity; he had learning to understand perfectly whatever it was his part to speak; and judgment to know how far it agreed or disagreed with his character. Hence arose a peculiar grace, which was visible to every spectator; though few were at the pains of examining into the cause of their pleasure. He could soften and slide over, with a kind of elegant negligence, the improprieties in a part he acted, while, on the contra-

ry, he would dwell with energy upon the beauties; as if he exerted a latent spirit, which had been kept back for such an occasion, that he might alarm awaken, and transport, in those places only, where the dignity of his own good sense could be supported by that of his author.

A little reflection upon this remarkable quality, will teach us to account for that manifest languor which has sometimes been observed in his action, and which was generally, though I think falsely, imputed to the natural indolence of his temper.

For the same reason though in the customary rounds of his business he would condescend to some parts in comedy, he seldom appeared in any of them with much advantage to his character. The passions which he found in comedy were not strong enough to excite his fire; and what seemed want of qualification, was only absence of impression.

He had a talent at discovering the passions, where they lay hid in some celebrated parts, by the injudicious practice of other actors. When he had discovered, he soon grew able to express them; and his secret for attaining this great lesson of the Theatre, was an adaption of his look to his voice; by which artful imitation of nature, the variations in the sound of his words gave propriety to every change in his countenance. So that it was Mr. Booth's peculiar felicity to be heard and seen the same, whether as the *pleased*, the *grieved*, the *pitying*, the *reproachful*, or the *angry*.

One would almost be tempted to borrow the aid of a very bold figure, and, to express this excellence

the more significantly, beg permission to affirm, that the blind might have seen him in his voice, and the deaf have heard him in his visage.

His gesture, or, as it is commonly called, his action was but the result and necessary consequence of this dominion over his voice and countenance; for having by a concurrence of two such causes, impressed his imagination with such a stamp and spirit of passion, his nerves obeyed the impulse by a kind of natural dependency, and relaxed or braced successively into all that fine expressiveness, with which he painted what he spoke, without restraint or affectation. A. Hill.

Mr. Booth was a man of strong, clear, and lively imaginations. His conversation was engaging and instructive. He had the advantage of a finished education, to improve and illustrate the bountiful gifts of nature; as will appear by the following inscription, which he wrote under the picture of that celebrated actor Mr. Smith, which has been greatly admired for the clasical style and sentiment.

Scenicus eximius,
Regnante Carolo Secundo:
Bettertono Coætaneus & Amicus,
nec non propemodum Æqualis.
Haud ignobili Stirpe oriundus,
nec Literarum rudis humaniorum,
rem Scenicam
per multos feliciter Annos administravit;
Justoque moderamine & morum suavitate,

Omnium intra Theatrum
Observantiam, extra Theatrum Laudem,
Ubique Benevolentiam & Amorem, sibi conciliavit.

An excellent Player,
in the reign of Charles the Second:
The cotemporary and friend of Betterton,
and almost his equal.
Descended of no ignoble family,
nor destitute of polite learning,
the business of the stage
he for many years happily managed,
And by his just conduct, and sweetness of manners,
he obtained
the respect of all within the Theatre,
the good will and love of all mankind.

Mr. Booth had a very pretty poetical genius, as appears from some translations and imitations of his beloved Horace. And his beautiful song of *Sweet are the charms of her I love*, &c. may justly be reckoned a master piece in its kind.

He was interred at Cowley; but we do not hear that *his most beloved wife* hath, as yet, erected any monument to his memory. He many years himself talked of putting up some memorial at Westminster, for Mr. Betterton; but these promises were merely ærial. He has indeed by the denomination of three streets in Westminster, viz. Cowley-street; Barton-street, and Booth-street, perpetuated the memory of Mr. Cowley, whose writings he professed a

value for beyond any other English poet, and the name of himself and family.

Mr. Thomas Elrington,

Was born about the year 1690, near Golden-square. His father had the honor to serve the late Duke of Montague. He put this son an apprentice to an Upholster in Covent-Garden, who, at the expiration of his time, immediately entered himself with the company of comedians in Drury-lane, and appeared in the character of Oroonoko, in which he gave evident proofs of a rising genius; but not meeting with the encouragement from the directors his merit demanded, he went over to Ireland, and became one of the managers of that Theatre.

About the year 1716, he married the daughter of Joseph Ashbury Esq. then *master of the revels*,* by whom he had several children. His reputation as an actor daily increasing, he was sent for over to England, and performed in the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, most of the considerable characters in tragedy; for which nature had very happily adapted him, his person being very proportionable, and his gait very genteel; he had likewise a most harmonious voice, with great spirit and fire, and wanted only a more liberal education, to have become one of the greatest tragedians this age has produced. He returned back to his family, in Ireland, in which kingdom he died, about the year 1733, universally beloved and lamented.

* A facetious intimation of manager.

Mr. Benjamin Griffin.

This useful comedian of the humorous class, was the son of the reverend Mr. Benjamin Griffin, Rector of Buxton and Oxnead in the county of Norfolk; the seats of the Pastons, Earls of Yarmouth; to which honorable family he was many years chaplain.

Our actor was born at Oxnead, and educated at the free school of Northwalsham, founded by the noble family beforementioned.

He was put apprentice to a Glaizer at Norwich; but playing running more in his head, than glazing, he run away from his master, and got initiated among a pack of strollers, who frequented the city, in the year 1712.

He came to London 1715, and was taken into the Lincoln's Inn Fields company; and after some years experience, he was accepted of at the Theatre Royal in Drury-lane, where he continued to the time of his death, 1739.

By mistaking his talents, he attempted to commence dramatic poet, by vamping up an old play or two of Massinger and Decker, and *scribbling* a few farces, all which met with the deserved contempt of such trifling performances.

Mr. James Quin.

This worthy successor of Mr. Booth, was born in King Street, Covent Garden, 24th of February, 1692. He is the son of James Quin Gent. who was bred at Trinity College Dublin; came into England, and en-

tered himself of the society of Lincoln's Inn; but his father, Mr. Mark Quin, Apothecary, and Lord Mayor of Dublin, 1676, dying soon after, he was called to the bar, and leaving him a considerable fortune, he declined the practice of the law.

Our excellent Tragedian, being carried by his father into Ireland in the year 1700, then but eight years old, was educated under that eminent schoolmaster the Rev. Dr. Jones of Dublin.

On the death of his father, 1710, he was obliged to commence a suit in Chancery, for the right and possession of his patrimony; but being unable to support the great expence of that court, he was obliged to leave his right undetermined, and for a time to drop his claim.

From this disappointment at law, he was advised by his friends, to cultivate a natural propensity, and apply himself to the stage, which he did with some success in that kingdom. But the Irish Theatre then labouring under great discouragement, he returned to England, 1714, and was immediately received into the company of his Majesty's servants belonging to the Drury Lane Theatre.

He continued in that company about three years; but upon some unkind treatment from one of the Managers, he changed his situation, and was received with great satisfaction by Mr. Rich, then acting at the Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. In that company he continued sixteen years.

In 1734, Charles Fleetwood, Esq. having purchased the Drury Lane patent, made Mr. Quin some

very advantageous proposals, which he would not, on any terms accept, till he had previously acquainted Mr. Rich therewith, and given him the preference of his services. But on Mr. Rich's refusal, he, in justice to himself, accepted the overtures made him by Mr. Fleetwood.

Mr. Quin performs the following parts with universal applause, viz. Appamantus in *Timon of Athens*, Baron in *Fatal Marriage*, Brutus in *Julius Cesar*, Benedict in *Much ado about Nothing*, the Duke in *Measure for Measure*, Dorax in *Don Sebastian*, Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida*, Falstaff, Valpone, King Lear, Richard Third, Henry Eighth, the Plain Dealer, the Double Dealer, Pinchwife, Old Batchelor, the Spanish Friar, Othello, Tamerlane, Cato, &c.

In regard to Mr. Quin's Dramatic character, it may be thus justly comprised :

> He from due merit his applause obtains;
> He wants no judgment, and he spares no pains.

Mr. William Milward.

This gentleman is a native of the city of Litchfield, where he was born on the 29th September, 1702. His father was an eminent Attorney at Law, at that time residing there. The Milwards are descended from an ancient family in the county of Derby, well known for their loyalty and steady attachment to their Prince ; as a proof of which, in the troubles of King Charles I. the great grand father of our player,

Sir Thomas Milward, Knight, Chief Justice of Chester, at his own expence, raised and maintained a troop of horse in defence of his King and country; among whom were likewise his grandfather, and several other relations of Mr. Milward, to whom I will now return. His father, when he was very young, removing from Litchfield to Uttoxeter, a market town in the same county, he had his education in the grammar school there; which school is always supplied with masters from Trinity College, in Cambridge, and a yearly stipend from the said College allowed for their support. Before the age of sixteen, he came with his father to London, and was put apprentice to an Apothecary in Norfolk Street, in the Strand, 1717, with whom he continued near eight years; but being acquainted with some young gentlemen, sometimes acted plays privately for the diversion of themselves and friends, he was prevailed on to join them, and accordingly performed several parts among them, in a small private Theatre made at the Hoop tavern, in St. Albans Street. Being flattered by some friends that he would make a considerable figure on a public stage, to which his genius strongly led him, he resolved to quit the study of physic for that of the Drama; and accordingly, in the year 1724, commenced at the new Theatre in the Hay Market, with a young company who had never appeared on a public stage; whose incapacity and inexperience soon gave way to two established Theatres, and obliged them to provide other ways for themselves, according to their different capacities. Some quitted the thoughts

of the stage; others, by flattery and their own inclinations, resolved to pursue that way of life; among whom Mr. Milward was one; and in the year 1725, engaged in Mr. Rich's company at the Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where he continued till the opening of the Theatre in Covent Garden, and all that season; at the end of which he had overtures from the company of Comedians who had just separated themselves from the Managers of the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, with whom, after he had received a message from Mr. Rich that the salary he expected would not be complied with, and giving him proper notice, he again agreed to perform at the New Theatre in the Hay Market, where he continued till the company agreed with Mr. Fleetwood to return again to Drury Lane, under whose direction they now are. The parts Mr. Milward is possessed of being too numerous to be recited, the town are the best judges of his daily improvement; and he may be justly thought to be the most proper successor of Mr. Quin, who has now left this stage and kingdom.

Mr. Henry Giffard.

This gentleman is the youngest of eight sons of William Giffard, Esq. of the county of Bucks; he was born in Lincoln's Inn Fields in the year 1699, and educated at a private grammar school in London. At about sixteen years of age, through the interest of his father, he was appointed one of the clerks of the South Sea company, in which post he

continued near three years; but having a stronger propensity to the martial acts of the stage than the mercantile accompts of the State, he made an excursion, and entered himself among the Bath strolling company of Comedians, 1719, whose fortunes he followed two years, wholly unknown to all his friends. Returning to town, and hoping to atone for this excursion with his father, who was then in London in a very declining state of health, he was disappointed in these hopes by his father's death, which happened in about six months after. Being thus left wholly destitute, and deprived of his fortune as a severe punishment for his fault, he was obliged to make the best of that inclination which prompted him to the commission of it. He was taken into Mr. Rich's company. Here he staid about two years, and then went to Ireland. In the Dublin Theatre he was very readily accepted, and in a very short time was admitted one of the sharers. Soon after he married a young gentlewoman of that Theatre, who died before she was twenty years of age, in childbed of a daughter; but, as some compensation for so great a loss, she left him a son, now about her age. She had a very promising genius to have shone in her profession; was very amiable in her person, and in her affection as a wife, every way deserving praise.

About six years afterwards he married another gentlewoman of the same Theatre; by whom he has had issue one daughter, who died an infant of but two years old.

Mr. Giffard and his wife came to England 1730.

Here it must be observed, that he had some hopes of success, from an invitation made him, with great show of friendship, by Mr. Wilks. But Mr. Giffard not brooking too long a delay, and the project of the Goodman's Fields Theatre just then opening, he closed in with that undertaker; who not succeeding therein, Mr. Giffard from a different conduct became the sole proprietor; and in 1733, rebuilt it in a very commodious manner, giving universal satisfaction to the town, as he does at present, by his regularity and prudent behaviour.

Under this article of Mr. Giffard's fortunes, we cannot omit mentioning one of his company, for whom he had the greatest and most friendly regard.

Mr. Charles Hulett.

He was the son of Mr. John Hulett, yeoman of the Guards, a Warder of the Tower, and out Steward to the Earl of Northampton, and born in Russell Street, Bloomsbury, 1701. Having had a tolerable education, he was put apprentice to Mr. Curll, Bookseller, in the year 1718. After he had served about two years, he took it into his head, that there was more to be got by acting of plays, than by selling of them. His master very generously advised his father to let him prosecute the bent of his genius, and very amicably surrendered him up to the stage. He trod the Theatres of Lincoln's Inn Fields and Dublin; but found the most hospitable entertainment with his valuable friend Mr. Giffard.

He was taken off in the vigour of his age, in a most sudden and surprising manner, being very fond of shewing the strength and soundness of his lungs, as he imagined, by loud hemming, one day, as he was in the Green-Room at Goodman's Fields, to shew the *clearness of his pipes,* as he expressed himself, he fetched a very hearty hem, with such violence, that he broke some considerable blood-vessel; for in a short time he found himself giddy, sick, and turned pale. He went behind the scene and a large quantity of blood issuing from his mouth, almost unknown to him, he was advised to go home. Mr. Giffard sent for Dr. Beaufort, and another eminent physician; but the flux of blood continuing in so large a quantity from his mouth, as was computed in the whole to be near two gallons, they thought it in vain to prescribe, and he died the 24th hour after his hemming. An accident of this kind, was looked on as unheard of before.

Both nature and inclination had formed him for a very excellent player, had he lived; and what he was at the time of his death, will be seen from the following just character given of him by Mr. Giffard, who buried him in a very genteel manner, at his own expence, at St. Mary White-Chapel, in the 35th year of his age. He has left a son about eight years old.

"Mr. Charles Hulett was endowed with great abilities for a player; but laboured under the disadvantage of a person rather too corpulent for the hero or the lover, but his port well became Henry VIII.

Falstaff, Othello, and many other characters both in tragedy and comedy, in which he would have been equally excellent, had his application and figure been proportionable to his qualifications; which had he duly cultivated, he would undoubtedly have become a very considerable performer."

Mr. Lacey Ryan.

He is the son of Mr. Daniel Ryan, a taylor, of the parish of St. Margaret Westminster, and was born in the year 1700: he had his education at St. Paul's-School; after which it was intended to breed him to the law, and he was a short time with Mr. Lacey, an attorney, his Godfather. He had once some thoughts of going to the East-Indies, with his brother, who died there 1719, but a stronger propensity to the stage prevailing by the friendship of Sir Richard Steele he was introduced into the Hay-Market Company 1710. In that company he continued about seven years, and afterwards went to the Lincoln's-Inn-Fields Company under Mr. Christopher Bullock. Among all the parts performed by him, Hamlet is looked upon as his master-piece.

Mr. Thomas Walker.

He is the son of Francis Walker, of the parish of St. Anne Sobo, and was born in the year 1698. He was bred under Mr. Midon, who kept a private Academy.

Having an inclination to the stage, he first tried his success in Mr. Sheppard's Company; and was found by Mr. Booth acting the part of Paris in the Droll of *The Siege of Troy.*

The first Theatre whereon he appeared, was that of Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, where he played the part of Lorenzo in *The Jew of Venice,* about the year 1716. But Capt. Mackheath, in the *Beggar's Opera* is his top dramatic character; so that as Mr. Booth found him a hero, Mr. Gay dubbed him a highwayman. *Sic transit Gloria Mundi.*

Miss Margaret Saunders,

Is the daughter of Mr. Jonathan Saunders, an eminent Wine-Cooper. She was born at Weymouth, in the year 1686. Her mother was the daughter of Capt. Wallis, an experienced sea-officer of distinction in that place.

She was sent by her parents to a boarding-school at Steeple-Ashton in Wiltshire, where having had a genteel education, she was put apprentice to Mrs. Fane, an eminent milliner in Catherine-Street in the Strand.

After the expiration of her time, she was, at the earnest request of her hearty friend Miss Oldfield, though but 16 years of age, brought on the Drury-Lane Theatre; but was obliged to quit it, occasioned by a very violent Asthmatical indisposition, as has been before observed in the memoirs of Miss Oldfield, page 74, subjoined to this work.

Miss Younger and Miss Bignall.

To the Author of the History of the Stage.

Watford, June 22d, 1736.

SIR,

I had the pleasure of yours when at Busbye. At the same time Miss Younger received one; she desired her compliments, and begs to be excused writing; but it matters not; for I being conversant with her many years, can give you a just account of her family; and as for her merit on the stage, you are a much better judge than myself. It ever was the opinion of the town that both she and her sister* were excellent in their way.

Her father and mother, James and Margaret Younger, were born in Scotland. Her mother was a Keith, nearly related to the late Earl Marshal: her father rode in the third troop of Guards, and served several years in Flanders under King William.

She was born Sept. 2d, 1699, and came into the house, as near as I can guess, at seven years old, and has ever behaved with the greatest prudence.

Her first part was Princess Elizabeth. This is all I can say of Miss Younger; but since you are so good to have an opinion of my sincerity, you may be assured of the veracity of these facts.

I cannot give you any more particulars of myself or friends; nor do I think there wants any amend-

* Miss. Bignall.

ment in Miss Oldfield's life, only this, that she was brought on the stage by the interest of Sir John Vanbrugh, who was her great friend in the business of the house. There is an error about the child; he was no more than three years old when his father died. Your very humble servant,

M. SAUNDERS.

In the character of the Country Wife, Miss Bignall, through the whole action, made a very pretty figure, and exactly entered into the nature of the part. She had a certain grace in her rusticity, which gave us hopes of seeing her a very skilful player, and in some parts supply our loss of Miss Verbruggen.*

Miss Christiana Horton.

This gentlewoman is descended from a very good family in Wiltshire; she was born in the year 1696. When but a child she was bent upon trying the fate of a dramatic life, and accordingly engaged herself with Mr. Booker, master of a strolling company of players. Mr. Booth seeing her act the part of Cupid, in a droll called *Cupid and Psyche*, in Southwark Fair, 1714, and being pleased with her performance, he brought her on Drury Lane Theatre the year after. The first part she appeared in was Melinda, in the *Recruiting Officer*. She remained on that stage till it was tortured with several revolutions, and was at last persuaded to leave it for Covent

* See the Tatler No. 3.

Garden Theatre, in the year 1734, where she now remains.

She played the most considerable parts in several plays with success, even when Miss Oldfield and Miss Porter were in their highest perfection; particularly the part of Lady Brumpton in the *Funeral*, for which she received the highest compliments from Sir Richard Steele, the author; and Mr. Booth often declared that no one was so capable of playing Miss Oldfield's parts, after her decease, as Miss Horton. Mr. Wilks was of the same opinion, and proved it, by choosing her to play with him in several Comedies, where she appeared in Miss Oldfield's characters. The part of Millamant, in *The Way of the World*, was one of the foremost; and my intimacy with Mr. Wilks at that time, gave me an opportunity to be assured, that she acquitted herself in this character to the satisfaction of that celebrated actor, as well as to the delight of the audience.

That she remains now in the full possession of Miss Oldfield's parts, in Comedy, without a rival, is obvious to every one who frequents the Theatre; and is almost the only copy that can remind us of the excellent original; so much is the business of acting reduced from its former glory. I shall only add one observation more, which is, that in the meridian of life she retains her beauty, even without the entire loss of her bloom, and is by far the best figure on either stage.

Miss Catharine Raftor.

This gentlewoman was born in London, in the year 1711. She is the daughter of William Raftor, son of James Raftor, Esq. of the city of Kilkenny, in the kingdom of Ireland; a gentleman of a very ancient Roman Catholic family, and possessed of a considerable estate, which at the late revolution, was forfeited to the crown, by his sons being all engaged in the service of King James, after the battle of the Boyne, her father attended his Majesty to France, and obtained a Captain's commission in the French King's service; but growing weary of a military life, came to London, obtained a pardon of King William, and afterwards married Miss Elizabeth Daniel, daughter of Edward Daniel, an eminent Leather-seller on Fish Street Hill, with whom he had a handsome fortune. He was bred to the Law; but, being of the Romish persuasion, practiced under such restrictions as prevented his doing any thing more for his family, which was very large, than bestowing a genteel education on them.

Miss Raftor came on the stage in the year 1728, and married Mr. George Clive, an Attorney at Law, in 1732.

This excellent actress was first distinguished in the character of Dorinda, in the *Tempest*. But so extensive has been her genius in the Drama, that it may be said, without the least tincture of flattery, no woman, at her age, ever shone in so great a variety of characters, the truth of which assertion, the nu-

merous list of her parts, would, if recited, demonstrate.

Conclusion.

We shall close these our Dramatic Memoirs with the sentiments of Mr. Secretary Addison, in relation to Theatrical entertainments.

"I cannot, (says he) be of the same opinion with the *Reformers of Manners*, in their severity towards plays; but must allow, that a good play, acted before a well bred audience, must raise very proper incitements to good behaviour, and be the most quick and most prevailing method of giving young people a turn of sense and breeding.

"When the character, drawn by a judicious Poet, is presented by the person, the manner, the look and the motion of an accomplished player, what may not be brought to pass by seeing generous things performed before our eyes? The stage is the best mirror of human life; let me therefore recommend the apt use of a Theatre as the most agreeable and easy method of making a polite and moral gentry, which would end in rendering the rest of the people regular in their behaviour, and ambitious of laudable undertakings."

MEMOIRS

OF

MISS ANNE OLDFIELD.

NOTE BY THE PUBLISHER.

IN these memoirs, to avoid imputation from the chaste ear of delicacy, it is necessary to remark; that in the æra when many of the female class first flourished in the dramatic sphere, the world was not so scrupulously jealous of, nor sought for that refinement of virtue, which it will be allowed is a guardian monitor the present time to many ladies on the American *Stage.*

At the period when most of these memoirs take their date; ladies on the Stage appearing to every advantage, from grace of manner, beauty of person, melody of voice, costume, &c. attracted the attention of the other sex, whose titles, power and wealth, where forcible incentives; allurements, which too often predominate among all classes, among all ranks, grades, denominations and sex. From these considerations where will be wanting the philanthropic breast, when the charitable commiseration for errors, to which all thus situated, might be exposed, but which all have not wisely surmounted. Still there are examples of virtue set forth in the foregoing history, which will bear competition with instances of female honor (under similar circumstances) equal to that we have read of in any history.

MEMOIRS

OF THE LIFE OF

MISS ANNE OLDFIELD.

THE loss which the polite part of the town has sustained, in the death of Miss Oldfield, must be allowed to be irreparable; because, in Comedy, as she never had, so she has not left her equal.

Miss Anne Oldfield was born in Pall-Mall, in the year 1683. Her grandfather was a Vintner, but on her mother's side she was well descended. Her father rode in the Guards, and I have heard had a Commission under King James before he died. By his free way of living, he not only run out his income, but likewise spent a very pretty paternal estate. His daughter was put to Mrs. Wotton, a sempstress in King-street Westminster, but her genius for the stage was predominant, as appeared by her continual reading and repeating parts of plays. Mrs. Oldfield being left in strait circumstances, she and her daughter lived for some time with her sister Mrs. Voss, who kept the Mitre tavern in St. James' market. She married a second husband, one Wood.

Her daughter Miss Anne Oldfield, was introduced to Mr. Christopher Rich, by the late Sir John Vanbrugh, in the year 1699. About which time Miss Cross having made an excursion to France, with a certain Baronet, Miss Oldfield's first appearance on the stage was in a part of her's, Candiope, in *Secret Love;* or, the *Maiden Queen;* a tragi-comedy, written by Mr. Dryden.

Her second appearance was in a more capital part, Alinda, in the *Pilgrim* of Beaumont and Fletcher, in which Sir John Vanbrugh made some alterations, and Mr. Dryden wrote a Masque, to render the revival of this play more agreeable to the town, together with a new Prologue and Epilogue. The *Pilgrim* was indeed revived for the benefit of Mr. Dryden, in the year 1700, but he dying on the third night of its representation, his son attended the run of it, and the advantages accrued to his family. About three years after, upon the decease of that eminent actress Miss Verbruggen, who died in childbed, Miss Oldfield succeeded her in the part of Lady Lurewell, in the *Constant Couple;* or, *A Trip to the Jubilee,* written by Mr. Farquhar, which run fifty-two nights. But the part that rendered Miss Oldfield's excellence chiefly known to the town, was that of Lady Betty Modish, in the *Careless Husband,* a comedy, written by Mr. Cibber, in the year 1704. In this character it was that those two qualities, before observed by Mr. Cibber, of the *genteel* and the *elegant,* shone out in Miss Oldfield to their greatest degree of perfection; and the char-

acter was so admirably suited to the natural and agreeable manner of conversation peculiar to Miss Oldfield, that almost every sentence, in the part, may with justice be said to have been heard from her own mouth before she pronounced it on the stage. In short, it was not the part of Lady Betty Modish, represented by Miss Oldfield; but it was the real Miss Oldfield who appeared in the character of Lady Betty Modish.

The same year, the Royal Company of Comedians went down to Bath, where, among several plays acted by them during the season, Miss Campion, not only by her action, but her singing and dancing, had so far captivated the most noble William Duke of Devonshire, father of the late Duke, that he took her off the Stage. Of this amour farther mention will be hereafter made; because it is intended that these memoirs shall not only, with the utmost fidelity, consist of a recital of the peculiar excellencies of Miss Oldfield, but likewise contain a short digressionary history of the fate and fortunes of the most considerable actresses during the same period of time; an attempt which I hope will not be less useful than entertaining to every reader.

It is well known, that about this time, a strict alliance of friendship had commenced between Arthur Maynwaring, Esq. and Miss Oldfield. Mr. Oldmixon, who wrote the life of Mr. Maynwaring, assures the public, "That each of them loved with a passion, that could hardly have been stronger, had it

been both hers and his first love." * It was doubtless owing, in a great measure, to his instructions, that Miss Oldfield became so admirable a player, for as nobody understood the action of the stage better than himself, so nobody took greater pleasure than he to see her excel in it. He wrote several Prologues and Epilogues for her, and would always hear her rehearse them in private before she spoke them in public. I shall insert part of one,† to which in the speaking she gave an inimitable turn of humor; being an agreeable display of the manner how the ladies would govern under a *feminine monarchy.*

Could we a *Parliament* of *women* call,
We'd *vote* such *statutes* as would *tame ye all;*
First, we'd *resolve*, that all those *marry'd fellows*,
Should *banishment* endure, who durst be *jealous:*
For though that curst *disease* proceeds from *love's* soft passion,
Nothing should be a *crime* in *us* but demonstration.

Next, that those dull, uncomfortable wights,
Who *sleep* all *morning*, and who *sot* o' *nights*,
Should find, when they *reel* home with *surfeits* cloy'd,
Their tender *wives* with better *friends* employ'd.

Lastly, the *man* who breaks the marriage vow,
(If any such, *in this good house* you know)
For the *first time*, should suffer a *divorce;*
Adieu those tempting words——*for better and for worse:*
The *ladies* should be free again to *wed*,
And the *false* men be *naturally* dead.

* See Mr. Maynwaring's Life, 8vo. p. 43, &c.

† The Epilogue to the *Wife's Relief;* or, *The Husband's Cure.* A comedy written by Mr. Charles Johnson.

But hold! what makes *me* impotently rant?
The *will* we have——but O! the power we want:
And you, vile *husbands*, when these threats you hear,
Will only grow worse tyrants than you were.
Yet have a care—for though we cannot make
Laws for *mankind*, we can their *orders* break.
The *war*, 'tis said is drawing to an end;
And not *one woman* then can want a *friend*.
The *brave* will all to this dear town repair,
And they were always *guardians* of the *fair*;
By faithful service to their country done,
Our *sex's* favor they have fairly won;
And may they still have this propitious doom,
Conquest abroad, and just returns at home.

These are our wishes, —— and if any here
The glorious character of *soldier* bear,
I hope their favor to this Play they'll show,
And *pay* our *Poet* what to *us* they *owe*.

Mr. Maynwaring's friends, some of whom were of the highest rank, of both sexes often blamed him, nay, have had such quarrels with him concerning this affair, that even Miss Oldfield herself has frequently represented to him, that it was for his honor and interest to break off their alliance, which open frankness, on her side, did as he has often confessed, engage him to her the more firmly, and all his friends at last, gave over importuning him to leave her. They saw, by her most engaging manner, that she daily, and hourly, more and more entangled him in Cupid's nets, and it must be allowed that Mr. Maynwaring is not the only wise man who has fallen a victim to Venus. He really sustained a greater

weight of the public affairs, than some whose posts more immediately load them with the burthen. His very great intimacy and friendship with my Lord Godolphin and the Duke of Marlborough, who were then at the head of the ministry, could not but necessarily involve him in political researches, and it was to unbend his mind that he took delight to pass some hours with a woman, whose conversation was both soft and pleasant, and exactly agreeable to his own. It is not to be supposed that two persons under such an affectionate alliance, could meet without consummation; and all the quarter that is desired for Mr. Maynwaring's reputation in this transaction of his life, is, that none but the innocent would condemn him. For what Mr. Fenton has observed of the primitive state, may be justly applied to the satisfaction they enjoyed in each other.

> Pure from deceit, devoid of fear and strife,
> While love was all the pensive care of life.

It cannot be denied, but this amour was very expensive to Mr. Maynwaring, though it was not the only erroneous instance of his economy. No man could have a greater contempt for money, or abhorred what was mean and sordid more than he did: And it was wholly owing to his generosity and negligence of his own affairs, that after he had so profitable a post, as Auditor of the Imprest conferred on him, yet he made no addition to his fortune. When he sold his estate of Ightfield in Shropshire, to my lord Kilmurry, there was not, when the Mortgages were

paid off, above four thousand pounds left to be divided between him and his sister. The management of his domestic affairs he gave entirely up to his sister and servants; and those that knew what was the conduct of his family at Whitehall, never thought that he would be the richer for his post. His company was so much the delight of the great, the fair and the gay, that he was very little at home. However, we must leave him for a while in the business of his post; made happy, at certain intervals, by Miss Oldfield, in whose conversation all his political fatigues were most agreeably alleviated.

About this time, the English Stage met with as much opposition as the State. Nothing would go down but Italian Operas, and indeed Mr. Maynwaring, being a lover of Music, and a fine performer himself, gave into this polite taste, and wrote the following Prologue to Camilla.

While martial troops, with more than martial rage,
For Austria these, for Bourbon those engage;
Cover with blood th' unhappy Latian plains,
Insult their Shepherds, and oppress their swains;
Camilla, frighten'd from her native seat,
Hither is driv'n to beg a false retreat.

O may the exil'd nymph a refuge find!
Such as may ease the labours of her mind:
Hear her, ye fair, in tuneful notes complain,
Pity her anguish and remove her pain;
To you her vindication does belong,
To you the mourner has sddress'd her song.
Let her your hearts with just compassion move,
By Music soften'd and endear'd by love;

So may your warrior Lords successful fight,
May honour crown the day and love the night.
May conquest still attend their generous arms,
Till their swords grow as fatal your charms.

But let it here be observed, that though Mr. Maynwaring's love of music made him give some encouragement to the Italian Operas; yet he was a fast friend and vigorously pushed all his interest, both for promoting and improving the entertainment of the English Theatre, being truly sensible of this remark,

"While *Nicolino* like a *Tyrant* reigns,
Nature's neglected, and the *Stage* in *chains*."*

We must now return to Miss Oldfield, rising every season in reputation, from her inimitable performance, first acquired under the character of Lady Betty Modish, and in which she shone more, than in all the parts wherein she had hitherto appeared.

The author of the *Careless Husband*, thus impartially states the case, to his most noble patron the Duke of Argyll: "The best critics having long and justly complained, that the coarsness of most characters in our late Comedies have been unfit entertainments for people of quality, especially the ladies: And therefore, says he, I was long in hopes that some able pen, whose expectation did not hang upon the profits of success, would generously attempt to reform the town into a better taste than the world

* Epilogue to the *Careless Husband*.

generally allows them; but nothing of that kind having lately appeared, that would give an opportunity of being wise at another's expence, I found it impossible any longer to resist the secret temptation of my vanity, and so even struck the first blow myself: And the event has now convinced me, *that whoever sticks close to* nature, *cannot easily write above the understanding of the Galleries, though at the same time he may possibly deserve applause of the Boxes.*"

This Play, before its trial on the Stage, was examined by several people of quality, who came into the Duke of Argyll's opinion of its being a just, a proper, and diverting attempt in Comedy; but few of them carried the compliment beyond their private approbation: "For, says Mr. Cibber, when I was wishing for a little farther hope, they stopt short of your Grace's penetration, and only wished me what they seemed to fear, and you assured me of, a general success. And, if the dialogue of this Comedy flows with a more easy turn of thought and spirit, than what I have usually produced; I shall not yet blame some people for saying it is not my own, unless they know at the same time I owe most of it to the many stolen observations I have made from your Grace's manner of conversing."

I should not have dwelt so long on this Play, were it not the period from whence we may date the birth of Miss Oldfield as an actress. And, to demonstrate how exactly the Dramatical pencil has delineated her real character, under the imaginary one of Lady Betty Modish, I shall, both for the reader's enter-

tainment and information, refer him to the first scene of the second Act of the Play, between Lady Modish and Lady Easy; wherein the descriptions given of the allurements of dress, and other captivating charms, of wit, raillery and conversation, for which Miss Oldfield was so peculiarly remarkable, make it appear self-evident, that none but she could have sat for the picture.

It must here be noted, that the Summer before the appearance of the *Careless Husband* on the Stage, Mr. Maynwaring and Miss Oldfield spent the recess of a whole long vacation at Windsor, the scene of that Comedy, where they lodged in the Castle at the house of Mr. John Sewell, Treasurer and Chapter-Clerk to the Dean and College. The application of this hint, I submit to the reader's judgment, when he has considered the interview between the two ladies abovementioned.

In the chit-chat of Lady Betty Modish, may be found the raillery of Miss Oldfield. It was her wit that made her company always acceptable to persons of the highest rank; and as to her outward appearance, it was beautiful without artifice, and her address engaging without affectation.

We must now return to Mr. Maynwaring, who being made happy by Miss Oldfield with the birth of a son, it was such a rivet to Cupid's chains, as bound him much faster to his Venus. However, Mr. Maynwaring made a serious application of this natural incident; and set a firm resolution to himself of regulating his future conduct. He reduced all his

expences to stated allowances, and laid by a considerable part of the income of his Auditorship, saying, *He had been such a fool as to despise money till then, but now he would do as other men did, and endeavor to grow rich.* But this resolution was formed too late; for his company was so much the delight of the great, the fair and the gay, that he was very little at home. He drank freely, and as his wines were generally Champagne and Burgundy, it was to their corrosive qualities that he imputed the ill state of health he was fallen into; and has often spoken with concern, of the misfortune it had been to him, that people thought his conversation so agreeable, as to expose him to intemperance. However, Miss Oldfield by her care, and tender affection for him, prolonged his life some years; and her generosity has been so great, towards his son, that she has, by her last Will and Testament, bequeathed him a legacy much more than double the estate his father left, besides other provisions made for him.*

I shall now resume my dramatical narrations.

Upon Miss Cross's excursion to Paris, as before mentioned, I remember a jocose distich in an Epilogue spoken by Jo. Haines, on that occasion.

> We're ruin'd to a hair, not worth one souse,
> We've lost the prettiest trinket of our house.

Miss Cross, last belonged to the Theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, and has been dead some years.

Let us next view Miss Oldfield in the Tragic

* See No. I. and II. of the Appendix.

scene. In Phædra and Hippolitus, she appeared in company suitable to her own. The Dramatis Personæ of that excellent play, consisted but of four men and two women, viz. Mr. Betterton, Mr. Booth, Mr. Keene, Mr. Corey; Miss Barry, and Miss Oldfield.

Phædra, says Mr. Oldisworth,* is a consummate Tragedy; and the success of it was as great, as the most sanguine expectations of the authors friends could promise, or foresee. The number of nights, and the common method of filling the house, are not always the surest marks of judging what encouragement a play meets with; but the generosity of all the persons of a refined taste about town was remarkable on this occasion; and it must not be forgotten how zealously Mr. Addison espoused its interest, with all the elegant judgment and diffusive good nature, for which that accomplished gentleman was so justly valued by mankind. But as to Phædra, she has certainly made a finer figure under Mr. Smith's conduct, upon the English Stage, than either at Rome or Athens; and if she excels the Greek and Latin Phædra, I need not be put to the trouble of saying she surpasses the French one, though embellished with whatever regular beauties, and moving softness, Racine himself could give her.

The Prologue to this Tragedy was written by Mr. Addison, and spoken by Mr. Wilks. The fine turn of raillery it contains against the Italian Theatre, will, I think, justify my transcribing it in this place in defence of the English one.

* See his character of the author, prefixed to his works, p. xiv.

Long has a race of heroes fill'd the stage,
That rant by note, and thro' the gamut rage;
In songs and airs express their martial fire,
Combat in trills, and in a feuge expire;
While lull'd by sound, and undisturb'd by wit,
Calm and serene you indolently sit;
And from the dull fatigue of thinking free,
Hear the facetious fiddles repartee:
Our home-spun authors must forsake the field,
And Shakespeare to the soft Scarlatti* yield.

To your new taste the Poet of this day
Was by a friend advis'd to form his play;
Had Valentini, musically coy,
Shunn'd Phædra's arms, and scorn'd the proffer'd joy;
It had not mov'd your wonder to have seen
An Eunuch fly from an enamour'd queen:
How would it please, should she in English speak,
And could Hippolitus reply in Greek?
But he, a stranger to your modish way,
By your old rules must stand or fall to-day,
And hopes that you, will foreign taste command,
To bear for once with what you understand,

In the representation of the play itself, who could sit unmoved at a recital of the passions of Theseus's Queen, or the Princess Ismena, for their Hippolitus, when a Barry and an Oldfield were the pleaders?

And who was not pierced to the heart when Ismena pronounced these lines?

Let them be cruel that delight in mischief;
I'm of a softer mould; poor Phædra's sorrows
Pierce thro' my yielding heart and wound my soul.

* A celebrated Italian Singer.

For could you think that open gen'rous youth
Could with feign'd love deceive a jealous woman?
Could he so soon grow artful in dissembling?
Ah! without doubt his thoughts inspir'd his tongue,
And all his soul receiv'd a real love.
Perhaps new graces darted from her eyes,
Perhaps soft pity charm'd his yielding soul,
Perhaps her love, perhaps her kingdom charm'd him!
Perhaps—alas! how many things might charm him!

The care of Ismena, to preserve Hippolitus, and the resolution she forms of sharing his fate, is thus inimitably expressed:

O! haste away, my Lord, I go, I fly
Thro' all the dangers of the boist'rous deep.
When the wind whistles thro' the crackling masts,
When thro' the yawning ship the foaming sea
Rolls bubbling in; then, then I'll clasp thee fast,
And in transporting love forget my fear;
O! I will wander thro' the Scythian gloom,
O'er ice and hills of everlasting snow:
There when the horrid darkness shall enclose us,
When the bleak wind shall chill my shiv'ring limbs,
Thou shalt alone supply the distant sun,
And cheer my gazing eyes, and warm my heart.

Alas! my tender soul would shrink at death,
Shake with its fears, and sink beneath its pains,
In any cause but this—but now I'm steel'd,
And the near danger lessens to my sight.
Now, if I live, 'tis only for Hippolitus,
And with an equal joy I'll die to save him.
Yes, for his sake I'll go a willing shade,
And wait his coming in th' Elysian fields,
And there inquire of each descending ghost,
Of my lov'd hero's welfare, life and honor.
Add to the Elysian joys, and make that heav'n more happy.

The quotations I have here made, are to show the admirable diction of this play, and to justify Mr. Addison's censure, in the Tatler, *of the want of taste in the audience, for not encouraging this excellent tragedy.*

However, Miss Oldfield dismissed them with the following elegant Epilogue written by Mr. Prior.

Ladies, to-night your pity I implore
For one who never troubled you before:
An Oxford man, extremely read in Greek,
Who from Eu—ripides makes Phædra speak,
And comes to town to let us moderns know,
How women lov'd two thousand years ago.
If that be all, said I, e'en burn your play,
I-gad we know all that as well as they:
Show us the youthful handsome charioteer,
Firm in his seat, and running his career;
Our souls wou'd kindle with as gen'rous flames,
As e'er inspir'd the ancient Grecian dames:
Ev'ry Ismena wou'd resign her breast,
And ev'ry dear Hippolitus be blest.

Now of the bustle you have seen to-day,
And Phædra's morals in this scholar's play;
Something at last, in justice should be said,
But this Hippolitus so fills one's head.——
Well! Phædra liv'd as chastely as she cou'd,
For she was father Jove's own flesh and blood;
Her aukward love, indeed, was oddly sated,
She and her Poly were too near related;
And yet that scruple had been laid aside,
If honest Theseus had but fairly dy'd;
But when he came, what needed he to know,
But that all matters stood in *statu quo?*
There was no harm, you see; or grant there were,

She might want conduct, but he wanted care.
'Twas in a husband little less than rude,
Upon his wife's retirement to intrude:
He shou'd have sent a night or two before,
That he wou'd come exact at such an hour;
Then he had turn'd all Tragedy to jest,
Found ev'ry thing contribute to his rest;
The picquet friend dismiss'd, the coast all clear,
And spouse alone, impatient for her dear.

But if these gay reflections come too late
To keep the guilty Phædra from her fate;
If your more serious judgment must condemn
The dire effects of her unhappy flame:
Yet, ye chaste matrons, and ye tender fair,
Let love and innocence engage your care.
My spotless flames to your protection take,
And spare poor Phædra for Ismena's sake.

Miss Oldfield gained an universal applause by playing Ismena, in this Tragedy. The character showed her in a light of perfection hardly to be expressed; and indeed every part she acted was a demonstration of her daily improvement.

Some differences arising between Mr. Rich and his company, they joined in with the company at the Hay Market, acting under the licence of Vanburgh and Congreve, where Miss Barry and Miss Bracegirdle, both famous in their way, had been for some time. But Miss Oldfield's voice, figure and manner of playing soon made her shine out, even here, the brightest star. Upon the preference being given to her in the benefit plays, and other disputes fomented among the managers, Miss Barry and Miss Brace-

girdle entirely quitted the business, and left Miss Oldfield sole Empress of the stage.

The season following, the revolters returning to Drury Lane, made up one complete company; and in the spring came on Mr. Phillips's Tragedy, *The Distrest Mother.* Miss Rogers, an actress, who in her turn had made a considerable figure on the stage, was designed the part of Andromache, Hector's widow, &c. that is, the Distrest Mother. But the author, as well as his friends, were soon convinced that Miss Oldfield was infinitely the more accomplished person for so capital a part. Upon its being given to her, Miss Rogers raised a posse of profligates, fond of tumult and riot, who made such a commotion in the house, that the court hearing of it, sent four of the Royal Messengers, and a strong guard, to suppress all disorders. This being effected, the play was brought upon the stage and crowned with deserved success.

As Mr. Smith had introduced a Greek Tragedy upon our Theatre, Mr. Phillips was willing to try what reception would be given to a French one. *Phœdra and Hippolitus,* is by much the superior performance; but the *Distrest Mother,* by dramatical management, to which Mr. Smith was an utter stranger, greatly exceeded it in the run; and to do the English author justice, it is a good modern play. I shall here let him speak for himself.

*"This Tragedy is formed upon an original which passes for the most finished piece in this kind of

* See his Dedication to the Duchess of Montague.

writing, that has ever been produced in the French language. * It is written in a stile very different from what has been usually practiced, among us, in Poems of this nature.

"If I have been able to keep up the beauties of Monsieur Racine in my attempt, and to do him no prejudice in the liberties I have taken frequently to vary from so great a poet, I shall have no reason to be dissatisfied with the labour it has cost me to bring the completest of his works upon the English Stage."

However, I cannot think it improper, in this place, to remark, that as full as Mr. Phillips is of his eulogiums on Monsieur Racine, yet at the same time Euripides is acknowledged to be the original author. So that the *Distrest Mother* has two passports for her safe arrival in Great Britain.

The Prologue to this play was written by Sir Richard Steele, and spoken by Mr. Wilks.

Since fancy of itself is loose and vain,
The wise by rules that airy pow'r restrain:
They think those writers mad, who at their ease
Convey this house and audience where they please;
Who nature's stated distances confound,
And make this spot all soils the sun goes round:
'Tis nothing, when a fancy'd scene's in view,
To skip from Covent Garden to Peru.

But Shakespeare's self transgress'd, and shall each elf,
Each pigmy genius quote, great Shakespeare's self!
What critick dares prescribe what's just and fit?
Or mark out limits for such boundless wit?

* See his Preface.

Shakespeare could travel thro' earth, sea, and air,
And paint out all the powers and wonders there;
In barren deserts he makes nature smile,
And give us feasts in his enchanted isle.

Our author does his feeble force confess,
Nor dares pretend such merit to transgress;
Does not such shining gifts of genius share,
And therefore makes propriety his care.
Not only rules of time and place preserves;
Your treat with study'd decency he serves;
But strives to keep his characters entire,
With French correctness and with British fire.

This piece, presented in a foreign tongue,
When France was glorious, and her Monarch young,
A hundred times a crowded audience drew:
A hundred times repeated, still 'twas new.

Pyrrhus provok'd, to no wild rants betray'd,
Resents his generous love so ill repaid;
Does like a man resent, a Prince upbraid.
His sentiments disclose a Royal mind,
Nor is he known a King from guards behind.

Injur'd Hermione demands relief;
But not from heavy narratives of grief:
In conscious Majesty here pride is shown;
Born to avenge her wrong, but not bemoan.

Andromache——If in our author's lines,
As in the great original she shines,
Nothing but from barbarity she fears,
Attend with silence; you'll applaud with tears.

Having before observed, that Phædra and Andromache are, both the children of Euripides; I shall here observe, that the kind entertainment they met

with on the English Stage, was chiefly owing to Miss Barry and Miss Oldfield; whose manner of speaking the very humorous Epilogue, written by Mr. Budgell, greatly contributed to the run of the last Play; and which, whenever revived, the audience always have insisted on.

I hope you'll own, that with becoming art
I've play'd my game, and topp'd the widow's part.
My spouse, poor man! could not live out the Play,
But dy'd commodiously on wedding-day:
While I, his relict, made at one bold fling
Myself a Princess, and young 'Sty a King.

You ladies, who protract a lover's pain,
And hear your servants sigh whole years in vain
Which of you all would not on marriage venture,
Might she so soon upon her jointure enter?

'Twas a strange 'scape! had Pyrrhus liv'd till now,
I had been finely hamper'd in my vow.
To die by one's own hand, and fly the charms,
Of love and life in a young monarch's arms,
'Twere an hard fate—ere I had undergone it,
I might have took one night—to think upon it.

But why, you'll say, was all this grief exprest
For a first husband, laid long since at rest?
Why so much coldness to my kind protector?
——Ah ladies! had you known the good man Hector!
Homer will tell you (or I'm misinform'd)
That, when enrag'd the Grecian camp he storm'd,
To break the ten-fold barriers of the gate,
He threw a stone of such prodigious weight,
As no two men could lift, not even those,
Who in that age of *thund'ring mortals* rose:
—It would have sprain'd a *dozen modern* beaus.

At length, however, I laid my weeds aside,
And sunk the widow in the well-dress'd bride;
In you it still remains to grace the play,
And bless with joy my coronation-day:
Take then, ye circles of the brave and fair,
The fatherless and widow to your care.

I must now relate the melancholy parting of two sincere friends. Nothwithstanding Miss Oldfield's great care and concern for Mr. Maynwaring's welfare, his negligence of himself brought upon him a violent relapse of his former indisposition, which daily increased; insomuch that his friends began to despair of his recovery.

Such was the inveteracy of party malice at this time, that, because Mr. Maynwaring was chiefly concerned in writing the Medley, the Examiner, in one of his papers, upbraided him, even with his sickly constitution, which however was not owing to any debaucheries, as he had maliciously represented.

Mr. Maynwaring had lodgings at Hampstead, and rode out every day, hoping for some benefit by that most healthful exercise. But, upon paying a visit to her Grace the Duchess of Marlborough, at her seat near St. Albans, he caught so violent a cold by walking too late in the gardens, and it increased upon him so fast, that it was his own opinion, it would finish what his former illness had began. His physicians, Sir Samuel Garth and Sir Richard Blackmore, expressed very small hopes of his recovery; which gave the more cause of apprehension to his friends, for both those gentlemen were among the first of that number, and as much concerned in friendship as

practice, to save him if possible. His relations would have Dr. Radcliff consulted, and the late Earl of Oxford happening to see the Doctor before he had been with Mr. Maynwaring, spoke thus to him—*Pray Doctor take care of that gentleman, one of the most valuable lives in England.* Indeed Mr. Maynwaring was at last so much obliged by that minister's good offices and civilities, that he declared, if he should recover, *he would never more draw his pen against him.* But it was out of the power of physic to help him, his inward decay was so great. He was thrown into such a languishing condition, that though his distemper was not then thought to be a consumption, yet it had all the symptoms and effects produced by one. He was visited, in this his last sickness, by all the great people of both sexes, who had the happiness of his acquaintance, though he was able to see but few of them. And it is to his glory, that the greatest lady in England* wept often by his bed-side, which tears he mutually returned, being sensible how much he owed to such an illustrious mourner, when he was sensible of little or nothing else. He had not words to express the transport he felt, when he was almost even in the agony, to see himself so far in the good graces of a lady of such high rank and merit, as that his danger should strike her dumb, and leave it to her eyes to express the sorrows of her heart. It is supposed he would fain have endeavoured to have broke through the excess of his grief, and formed some utterance for it: but his

* Queen Anne of England.

sister remained in the room. This emotion of his was the more extraordinary, on account of a slight misunderstanding at that time, between him and this great lady. He had given her some cause of disgust, but was not conscious to himself in what, and it is thought, that his perplexity about it contributed somewhat to the increase of his distemper. He did all in his power to express his concern for the unknown offence, but he was too near death, and in a few hours after she had left him, he expired in the arms of his servant, Mr. Thomas Wood, now Treasurer of the Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, on the 12th of Nov. 1712, in the prime of his age, being but forty-four years old.

After his decease, a most scandalous and false rumor was spread, chiefly levelled at Miss Oldfield, that he died of a venereal malady. But to obviate so ungenerous a reflection, his body, by her direction, was opened by two surgeons—Mr. Bussiere and Mr. Browne; in the presence of two physicians, Dr. Beeston and Dr. West; and of his apothecary Mr. Buckeridge.

These gentlemen, all, declared, that there was not the least symptom of any thing *venereal;* but that he died of a consumption. He had in his life time, heard the whisperings of malicious rumor, charging him with such an indisposition; but he once complained very pathetically to her, that he was not conscious of any such distemper; confessing at the same time, that, in the reign of king William, he had made an unfortunate sally in an amour, which gave him a

slight taint at Paris, 1698; that he was only patcht up there, but afterwards perfectly cured at London, since which time he never had any such misfortune.

It is the duty of an historian to speak the truth, as far as it comes to his knowledge, and as great a veneration as I have for Mr. Maynwaring's memory, I could not avoid mentioning even this blemish of it, in justice, and to clear up the unjust aspersion cast on Miss Oldfield.

It was not long before his death, that he made his Will, all which he wrote with his own hand, and to which his apothecary Mr. Buckeridge, and his servant Mr. Wood, were witnesses, when it was executed at Miss Oldfield's house in Southampton-street, Covent-Garden. He charged them not to take any notice of what they knew; which however was little enough, for he intrusted no body with the secret of his having made Miss Oldfield his Executrix, though by her behavior to him, he could not in justice do otherwise, on his son's account; nor could any woman better deserve all that was in his power to give; of which truth his son is a living witness.

Notwithstanding the clamor his will made, after his decease; himself, who best knew what he had to leave her, could not imagine such a stir would have been made about so small an estate. He was far from dying rich, leaving very little more than three thousand pounds behind him, which he divided equally between his sister, his son's mother, and the child, who, in feature and vivacity, was very like his father. Often have I heard Mr. Maynwaring bemoan

the child, and say, *what will become of the boy when I am gone.* This anxiety proceeded from the *little* he possessed. It is true he had such a noble contempt of the goods of fortune, that he never took care to make one, nor ever resolved to grow rich.

Had I a talent for panegyric, I could be proud of this opportunity to do justice to the memory of a gentleman, whose name would be immortal, had not his modesty been as great as his merit; had he not contented himself with the *pleasure* of writing, and resigned the *glory* of it to others. As to the author of the Medley, the Examiner was obliged to allow that he wrote with *a tolerable spirit and in a masterly style.* A *spirit*, indeed, which has not many equals, and a *style* worthy the imitation of the greatest masters. His learning was without pedantry; his wit, affectation; his judgment, without malice; his friendship, without interest; his zeal, without violence; in a word, he was the best subject, the best relation, the best master, the best critic, and best political writer in Great Britain.

Shortly after his decease, was published *a defence of Mr. Maynwaring, in a letter to a friend.* It was, Mr. Oldmixon asserts,* supposed to be written by the right honorable Robert Walpole, Esq. and is not unworthy so good a hand for its generosity, spirit, and elegance.

SIR,

I write to you upon a circumstance, for which it

* See the Posthumous Works of Mr. Maynwaring published by him, page 351.

is the interest of all mankind to be concerned. The public is under the administration of its respective ministers and officers, who are obliged by their posts to consult the true welfare of it. But incidents, which happen alike to all, and from which no man can be exempt, fall under every man's care, and are to be considered and laid home to the bosom of every man breathing. It is incumbent upon each individual person, for his own sake, to *defend* the *absent*; but much more so to *defend the dead*, who are to be *absent forever*. I have reasons for thinking I am called to this duty, upon the accidental perusal of a virulent libel,* wherein the author after much discourse about himself, has (alluding to a gentleman who lately departed this life) the following words, "Suppose I were also to tell the world, that the most active enemy against this paper, was *one* who got to be poor in the Jacobite cause, and then run over into *two* desperate extremes, and was resolved at once to grow rich and honest in the cause of the Whigs. That outlived his works a little too long; till having parted with religion and morality, he threw away his honor in a careless manner after it, together with his humanity and natural affection to a kind sister, his estate, fortune, and even the vouchers belonging to his office. All which were bestowed as monumental legacies of Whig honesty, on a celebrated Actress, who is too much admired *upon the stage*, to have any enquiry made in her conduct *behind the curtain*."

The person here levelled at, (Mr. Maynwaring was,

* See the Examiner February 9th, 1712—13.

in his younger days, tinctured with Jacobinism; an error no man ever renounced more heartily, and with greater abhorrence of it than he did. He was a man of great modesty, and could not exert himself in public places, or in mixed company; but when, in process of time, his talents grew conspicuous, in spite of a bashful nature, he was invited and courted into a familiarity with men in the highest power, and of the greatest abilities in the kingdom, to whom his conversation was both a pleasure and a service. Then it was that his words and actions first began to manifest the principles in which he lived and died. He had the highest obligations to that great minister, Sidney, Earl of Godolphin, Lord High Treasurer, and enjoyed by his favor, an office for life (Auditor of the Imprest.) After the removal of that noble Lord from the Treasury, the Examiner thought fit to disparage his services, by insinuations, and reflections, which the gentleman, of whom we are talking, had too much gratitude to hear without indignation. This I take to be the provocation which moved the Examiner to utter this reproachful language against him; among which he falls into the error of saying, *he outlived his works; but works of his, which outlive him,* will let us into the *secret* of this *cruel behavior.* The Medley, was often written by Mr. Maynwaring, this *active enemy* of the Examiner, in which so many gross *falsehoods* of *that* writer were detected,* that he had recourse to *detraction* rather than

* Medley No. 41, relating to the act of Indemnity. See also Medley No. 413, concerning the State Loans.

a *just defence* of himself, for which he had been called upon by Mr. Maynwaring in several subsequent papers.

From hence it appears, that the Examiner's treatment of this gentleman, is as just as it would be in a felon to publish a libel against the late Lord Chief Justice Holt, for passing sentence upon him to be burnt in the cheek. The Examiner has sense enough, though not grace enough, to know, that to *deserve*, not to *suffer* punishment, is truly shameful; but none but a man enraged, as in the supposed case of the felon, and incapable of remorse and shame, could forget all regards to the advantage his adversary had in the dispute, all tenderness with relation to a man's private affairs, so far as to mention the particulars of the gentleman's sister, and his passion for an actress. This account with his sister, I am very sure the Examiner can be no judge of, nor any one but the gentleman himself. The offence his passion for Miss Oldfield gave, to all who esteemed him, is to be lamented, but not to be mentioned with these aggravations, especially after his death, and that when he who speaks professes himself an enemy. But the Examiner takes upon him to be a champion for the church, and must not allow such sins to be venial; yet at the same time he should have considered, that the other party would recriminate, and have reflected, that there are too many of the Examiner's side, who do not behave themselves as if they were under vows of chastity. I know a *sly one* among his great friends, that loves a wench as well as

ever did old Rowley, (King Charles II.) Besides *him*, there is *another*, who finds leisure from his weighty affairs to stroll among the stews, or, as some will have it, neglects his writing now and then, to toy with a wanton. But this dull fellow, the Examiner, has so little sense of what the impartial world thinks of him and his performance, that he gives himself an air of talking by way of good humour. In the beginning of the same paper,* the pretty wanton is in a laughing vein, and with a very gay heart rallies us, for a curiosity he supposes we have to know the name, profession, trade, quality, complexion, or sex, of the author of the Examiner. This author has indeed been very much talked of; † a (1) woman, a (2) Divine, and (3) two or three gentlemen have been suspected; but no person that had any pretension to modesty, piety, or integrity, has been once named on this occasion. The folly of the fellow is monstrous, to pretend to speak of wenching, considering how the world is affronted as to this vice, at present. It is certain there never has been greater libertines than many who are now in vogue, and I am afraid one or the other of them has a design upon the celebrated actress abovementioned; else why does he fear to make *any inquiry into her conduct behind the curtain?*

* The Examiner of Feb. 9th, 1712—13, abovementioned.

† It is now well known that the persons concerned in carrying on the Examiner, were, 1. Mrs. Manley, 2. Dr. Swift, 3. Lord Bollingbroke, Mr. Prior, and Mr. Oldisworth. Messrs. Pope and Arbuthnot often laid their hands to the same plow, and some others of their clan.

If the whigs do lose her, they will bear it with the patience that they have already the defection of some others, though of greater quality, and higher obligations to be constant to us. But I speak this only from general rumour; for I do not believe she is gone off; so far from it, that I am credibly informed she has refused great sums, because she insists upon her lover's voting on our side. They are, it seems, both still firm to their honour, but I would lay on the woman's side, were it not that all wagers relating to politics are forbidden by act of Parliament.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

I think myself obliged to take off the Examiner's last aspersion on Mr. Maynwaring; (not spoken to in the foregoing excellent defence) it is this most notorious falsehood, that, *He threw away the vouchers of his office*, which I hereby solemnly declare he never could do, as never having a voucher in his custody, therefore could not lose one. This being a charge always committed by the Auditors to their officers; and Mr. Maynwaring's Deputies were known to be men of the most scrupulous care imaginable; he himself being esteemed by all who knew him, for which I particularly appeal to the Commissioners of the Customs, to be the most exact of any man in all the affairs he undertook. Indeed it was impossible for it to be otherwise, there not being in his time, a gentleman of better sense, more solid judgment, and quicker dispatch in business, during the intervals of wit and pleasure.

A true copy of his last will and Testament, hereunto annexed, sufficiently justifies the regular and honest disposition of that small fortune whereof he died possessed.

Having thus vindicated the memory of this excellent person, as well as Miss Oldfield's behaviour to him, I shall not presume to add any thing farther of my own to his character, but conclude with letting the reader know that Mr. Maynwaring's corps was interred in the church of Chertsey in the county of Surrey, where his grandfather Sir Arthur Maynwaring and his farther Charles Maynwaring, Esq. were likewise buried, and where they had heretofore a plentiful estate and fine seat. His obsequies were performed with great privacy, answerable more to his modesty than his merit. He never affected pomp living, and those who had the direction of his funeral, took care to fulfil this his last request, as they had done all others in his life time, with the utmost justice and honour.

He was born at Ightfield, in the county of Salop, in the year 1668, died 1712, aged forty four. Those who are desirous to know more particulars concerning him, and his writings, may consult his life and Posthumous Works, published by Mr. Oldmixon, in the year 1715, 8vo.

The Distrest Mother seemed now to be the case of Miss Oldfield, both on and off the stage. For, tho' the *town-talk* was wholly bent upon Mr. Maynwaring's making her executrix of his will, it must surely be acknowledged, that two thousand pounds

was no such mighty sum to bring up an orphan, from seven years old, suitable to the most ardent wishes of his father, which, in every respect, his mother has fully accomplished.

I think I cannot close the subject in debate more properly, than by applying to all intermedlers* in affairs which no ways concern them, a short essay of Mr. Maynwaring's in the Medley No. 33.

Of Modesty and Justice.

There is a law mentioned by Plato, which Jupiter is said to have enacted in his own name; *that if any man appeared plainly to be incapable of* modesty *or* justice, *he should immediately be knocked on the head as a common pestilence.* The account Plato gives of it is as follows.

He is describing the first state of human society; how mankind built towns to defend themselves from beasts; and how, in a more than brutal manner, they afterwards fell upon one another; and at last, he says, Jupiter, justly fearing that the whole race of mankind would be destroyed, ordered Mercury to go to them, and to carry along with him *modesty* and *justice*, as the best support and ornament of their new built cities, and the firmest bond of their mutual friendship. Mercury upon this occasion asked Jupiter, in what manner he should bestow *justice* and *modesty* upon mankind; whether, said he, as the *arts*

* It is hoped the coat will not sit to the shoulders of any generous reader to this work; however, it is not to be doubted, but they have seen it fit many of their passing neighbors.

are divided, shall I also divide these *virtues*, which are indeed of two kinds, and shall I give to some men *one*, to some the *other*, as we see by experience, that one skilful physician is sufficient for a great many of the ignorant, and so of other *arts* and *professions?* or, shall I so divide them among the whole race of mankind, as that every *single* person may have a share in them? divide them in *that manner*, says Jupiter, and let *all* mankind be partakers of them; for if these *virtues* were only conveyed to a *few*, as the arts and sciences are given, it would be impossible for any cities to subsist; therefore I would have you go farther, and establish a law in my name, *that whoever cannot be made to partake of modesty and justice, shall be destroyed as a plague of the republic.*

The application of this most excellent fable, is, that it would be much more commendable in all persons to have the *modesty* of leaving the administration of *justice* to those to whom it peculiarly belongs, and to mind only their own business.

To return to the stage. Before this time Mr. Betterton and Miss Barry had not only quitted the Theatre, but also the stage of life. I remember a passage in Mr. Henry Cromwell, Esq. that upon hearing of Mr. Betterton's death, he says, "he would have put over him this sentence of Tully for an epitaph."

*Vitæ bene Actæ jucundissima est Recordatio.**

It being, I presume, in that gentleman's opinion an universal one for all players.

* A life well acted is the best remembrance.

The next capital part, in which Miss Oldfield adorned the British Theatre, was in that beautiful transition from Hector's widow, to become a Queen of England. This was in Mr. Phillip's Tragedy of *Humphry, Duke of Gloucester*,* wherein she acted Margaret, Queen to King Henry VI. and spoke the following Epilogue.

The business of an Epilogue, they say,
Is to destroy the moral of the play;
To wipe the tears of virtue from your eyes;
And make you merry,—lest you should grow wise.
Well!—you have heard a dismal tale I own:
It almost, makes one dread—to lie, alone.
Ruffians, and ghosts, and murder, and despair,
May chase more pleasing visions from the fair.
Wives can awake their husbands, in their fright:
But, if poor damsels be disturb'd by night,
How shall they (helpless creatures!) lay the spright?
Forget it all:—and Beaufort's crime forgive:
Duke Humphry was—too good a man to live.
And, yet—his merit rightly understood;
We, now, have store of patriots, full as good!
Great souls, who, for their country's sake, would be content,
Their spouses should be doom'd to banishment.
Since Chronicles have drawn our Duke so tame;
Is Eleanor, if she survives, to blame?
A widow knows the good, and bad, of life;
And has it in her choice *to be*, or *not to be*, a wife!
Virgins, impatient, cannot stay to choose;
They risque it all;—not having much to lose!—
I mean,—such nymphs as sigh in rural shades,
(No midnight Shepherdess, at Masquerades:)

* Mr. Phillips wrote a tragedy, between this and the *Distrest Mother*, called the *Briton*, but Miss Oldfield had no part in it.

Or, such ill-fated maids, as pine in Grottoes,
And, never had th' experience of Ridottoes;
Where, notwithstanding they their market smother,
Some gain one trinket; and some, lose another.
These novelties with grief considerate women see;
For, should Italian modes prevail, pray what are we?
How oft do men our tender spirits vex,
By telling us, we are a trifling sex!
Yet,—I am told, Philosophers maintain,
Nature makes not the smallest thing *in vain:*
And, let demurest prudes say, what they will,
The *best* of women would be *women*, still.

The reader, I presume, will easily perceive the reason of my mentioning the Distrest Mother, next to Phædra and Hippolitus, as being both transplanted from Euripides; otherwise, according to the Chronology of the stage, Mr. Addison's *Cato* should have preceded all Mr. Phillips's Tragedies. I am also to acquaint the publick, that I have been desired, in the course of these memoirs, to insert the principal Prologues, which have been written by eminent hands, and spoken by Miss Oldfield; digressions equally useful and entertaining.

Miss Oldfield became so universally acceptable to the town, both in Comedy and Tragedy, that she was over-loaded with parts; and, obliged to quit the less considerable ones, especially in some plays, wherein, by her appearance only, in speaking an Epilogue, she kept them alive a little while, but afterwards they were wholly laid aside.

The plays of any consequence, in which Miss Oldfield performed original capital parts, I shall mention

as they came upon the stage; but, the small ones, she acted in modern plays, or those in which she succeeded in old ones, I shall recite in an alphabetical list at the close of these memoirs.

An agreeable incident having been communicated to me, I shall give it, just as it came to hand.

SIR,

"The late Miss Susannah Centlivre, who has obliged the town with the *Gamester*, the *Busy Body*, and several other entertaining Comedies, was so charmed with seeing Miss Oldfield play the part of Marcia in *Cato*, that she having, a little while before that Tragedy came on the stage, borrowed of Miss Oldfield, Fontenelle's Plurality of Worlds; after reading it, returned the book with the underwritten verses, in a blank leaf thereof; and as the compliment is genteel, and not fulsome, I hope it may not improperly be thought worthy of a place in Ophelia's memoirs. I am, Sir,

Your humble servant, &c.

JOHN LUCAS.

Whitehall, Nov. 18, 1730.

Plurality of World's! such things may be,
But I am best convinc'd by what I see.
Yet tho' Philosophers such schemes pursue,
And fancy'd worlds in ev'ry planet view;
They can but *guess* at orbs *above* the skies,
And *darkly paint* the lakes and hills that rise.
Now Cupid, skill'd in *mysteries* profound,
Points where more *certainty* of *Worlds* abound;
Bright Globes, that strike the *gazer* with surprise,
For they are *Worlds* of *Love*, and in Ophelia's eyes.

Miss Oldfield having hitherto been particularly considered but in two characters in Comedy, viz. Lady Lurewell, in the *Trip to the Jubilee*, and Lady Betty Modish, in the *Careless Husband*, I shall next consider the farther honour she has done Mr. Cibber, in some other of his performances. It was not only her voice and person that charmed the audience, but, as the Tatler* justly remarks, whatever character she represented, "She was always well drest. The make of her mind very much contributed to the ornament of her body. This made every thing look native about her, and her clothes were so exactly fitted, that they appeared as it were part of her person. Her most elegant deportment was owing to her manner and not her habit. Her beauty was full of attraction, but more of allurement. There was such a composure in her looks, and propriety in her dress, that you would think it impossible she should change the garb you one day see her in, for any thing so becoming, till you next day see her in another. There was no other mystery in this, but that however she was appareled, herself was the same. For there is so immediate a relation between our thoughts and gestures, that a woman must *think* well, to *look* well." This picture of Flavia, as drawn by Mr. Bickerstaff, is the *vera effigies* of the charming Ophelia.

Miss Oldfield's other original parts in Mr. Cibber's plays, were—Mrs. Conquest, in *The Lady's Last Stake; or, the Wife's Resentment;* Lucinda, in *The Rival Fools; or, Wit at several Weapons*, and

* No. 212, Vol. IV.

Ximena, in *The Heroic Daughter*, the heroine of that Tragedy; in which character she spoke the following Epilogue:

Well Sirs,
I'm come to tell you, that my fears are over,
I've seen Papa, and have secur'd my lover.
And, troth, I'm wholly on our Author's side,
For had, as Corneille made him, Gormaz dy'd,
My part had ended as it first begun,
And left me still unmarry'd and undone;
Or, what were harder far than both—a Nun.
The French, for form indeed, postpones the wedding,
But gives her hopes, within a year, of bedding.
Time could not tie her marriage knot with honour;
The father's death still left the guilt upon her.
The Frenchman stops her in that forc'd regard,
The bolder Briton weds her in reward.
He knew your taste would ne'er endure their billing
Should be so long deferr'd, when both were willing;
Your formal Dons of Spain an age might wait,
But English appetites are sharper set.
'Tis true, this difference we indeed discover,
That tho' like Lions you begin the lover,
To do you right, your fury soon is over.
Beside, the scene thus chang!d, this moral bears,
That virtue never of relief despairs.
But while true love is still in plays ill-fated,
No wonder you gay sparks of pleasure hate it.
Bloodshed discourages what should delight ye,
And from a wife what little rubs will fright ye?
And virtue, not consider'd in the bride,
How soon you yawn, and curse the knot you've ty'd?
How oft the Nymph, whose pitying eyes give quarter,
Finds, in her captive, she has caught a Tartar?
While to her spouse, who once so high did rate her,
She kindly gives ten thousand pounds to hate her.

So, on the other side, some sighing swain,
That languishes in love whole years in vain,
Impatient for the feast, resolves he'll have her,
And, in his anger, vows he'll eat forever;
He thinks of nothing but the honey-moon,
But little thought he could have din'd so soon.
Is not this true? speak dearies of the pit,
Don't you find too, how horribly you're bit?
For the instruction therefore of the free,
Our author turns his just catastrophe:
Before you wed, let love be understood,
Refine your thoughts, and chace it from the blood;
Nor can you then of lasting joy despair;
For when that circle holds the British fair,
Your hearts may find heroic daughters there.

Sir Richard Steele had the honor of Mrs. Oldfield's performing original parts in all his plays, viz. Lady Charlotte in the *Funeral;* the Niece, in the *Tender Husband;* Victoria, in the *Lying Lover;* Indiana, in the *Conscious Lovers.*

To divert an audience, by an innocent performance, was the chief design of the last comedy, who are thus addressed in the close of the Prologue.

Ye modest wise and good, ye fair, ye brave,
To night the champion of your virtues save;
Redeem from long contempt the comic name,
And judge politely for your country's fame.

There happened a very remarkable incident in the representation of the *Conscious Lovers,* which Sir Richard takes particular notice of in his preface, and I shall give it in his own words.

"This comedy was in every part excellently performed; and there needs no other applause of the actors,

but that they excelled according to the dignity and difficulty of the character they represented:—The tears which were shed on this occasion, flowed from reason and good sense, and men ought not to be laughed at for weeping, till we are come to a more clear notion of what is to be imputed to the *hardness* of the head and the *softness* of the heart; and I think it was very politely said of Mr. Wilks, to one who told him there was a * General weeping for Indiana †——*I'll warrant he'll fight ne'er the worse for that.* To be apt to give way to the impressions of humanity, is the excellence of a right disposition, and the natural working of a well turned spirit. The following song was designed for the entertainment of Indiana, but omitted for want of a performer; it expresses the distress of a love-sick maid, and may be a fit entertainment for some small critics to examine whether the passion is just, or the distress male or female.

From place to place forlorn I go,
With down cast eyes a silent shade;
Forbidden to declare my woe;
To speak, till spoken to, afraid.

My inward pangs my secret grief,
My soft consenting looks betray;
He loves, but gives me no relief:
Why speaks not he who may?

Among the many apologies for the stage, Miss Oldfield always preferred that humorous one given by Mr. Farquhar, in his discourse upon comedy.

* The honorable Brigadier General Charles Churchill
† Miss Oldfield's part.

"Poetry alone, and chiefly the drama, lies open to the insults of all pretenders; she was one of nature's eldest offsprings, whence by her birthright, and plain simplicity, she plead a genuine likeness to her mother. Born in the innocence of time, she provided not against the assaults of succeeding ages; and, depending altogether on the generous end of her invention, neglected those secret supports and serpentine devices used by other arts, that wind themselves into practice for more subtile and politic designs: *naked she came into the world,* and it is to be feared, like its professors, *will go naked out.*"

I have often heard Miss Oldfield mention the many agreeable hours she had spent in Mr. Farquhar's company. The original parts she had in his plays, were only two; Silvia in the *Recruiting Officer,* and Mrs. Sullen in the *Stratagem;* most of his comedies being written before Miss Oldfield's coming on the stage; and in the old parts, as already observed, she succeeded Mrs. Verbruggen, whose maiden name was Percival, and afterwards Mountfort.

Of this gentlewoman, I am naturally led into the relation of one melancholy scene of her life, in which I believe no parallel can be found either in ancient or modern history. Her father Mr. Percival had the misfortune to be drawn into the assassination plot against king William; for this he lay under sentence of death, which he received on the same night that Lord Mohun killed her husband Mr. Mountfort.

Under this, almost insuperable, affliction, she was introduced to the good Queen Mary, who being, as

she was pleased to say, *struck to the heart* upon receiving Mrs. Mountfort's petition, immediately granted all that was in her power, a remission of her father's execution for that of transportation. But fate had so ordered it, that poor Mrs. Mountfort was to lose both father and husband. For as Mr. Percival was going abroad, he was so weakened by his imprisonment, that he was taken sick on the road, and died at Portsmouth.

The *fatality* which happens to the *shedders of blood*, I have always remarked as a certain effect of the divine vengeance; and therefore all gentlemen who are apt to draw their swords upon the most trivial occasions, would do well to consider two or three accidents I shall here lay before them.

1. That they would please to remember Lord Mohun's catastrophe; who, as Mr. Mountfort fell by his hands, he fell in the duel between him and Duke Hamilton, himself sending the challenge.

2. At a representation of the *Scornful Lady* some years ago, for the benefit of Miss Oldfield, many persons of distinction were behind the scenes. Among others Beau Fielding came, and being always mighty ambitious of shewing his *fine make and shape*, as himself used vainly to talk, he very closely pressed forward upon some gentlemen, but in particular upon Mr. Fulwood, a Barrister of Gray's Inn, an acquaintance of Miss Oldfield. Mr. Fulwood being a gentleman of quick resentment, told Fielding he used him rudely; upon which, he laid his hand upon his sword, but Mr. Fulwood instantly drew and gave

Fielding a wound of twelve inches deep in the belly. This putting the audience into the greatest consternation, Mr. Fulwood was with much intreaty persuaded to leave the place. At length, out of respect to Miss Oldfield he did so, and went to the Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where the same evening the *Libertine* was acted. Mr. Fulwood went into the Pit, and in a very few minutes cast his eye upon one Captain Cusack, to whom he had an old grudge, and there demanded satisfaction of him. Captain Cusack without the least hesitation obeyed the summons. They went into the field, and in less than half an hour, word was brought into the house, that Mr. Fulwood was killed on the spot, and Captain Cusack had made his escape.

3. The last instance I shall produce is in the case of the late Lord Chief Justice Pine, of Ireland, who, when he was a student of Lincoln's-Inn, in those walks, killed the eldest son of one of the finest gentlemen in England, I beg to be excused from naming him, because he was my near relation. However, the weight of blood hung so heavy upon Mr. Pine, that he declared, he could not live in England, and went over to Ireland, in which kingdom indeed he made his fortune; but an over-ruling power dampt all his joys, even to the day of his death, because the price of blood was repaid in his own family, his eldest son being killed in a duel in Ireland.

As these accidental digressions will not be without their use, I hope they will not be judged in this

place impertinent, our Theatres being too often the scene of actions of this kind.

But let us now again resume the pleasing entertainment given by Miss Oldfield. To Mr. Rowe's excellent Tragedy of *Jane Shore*, she spoke the following Epilogue, and how she charmed throughout the whole play, every spectator must remember!

Epilogue to Jane Shore.

YE modest matrons all, ye virtuous wives,
Who lead with horrid husbands decent lives;
You, who for all you are in such a taking,
To see your spouses drinking, gaming, raking,
Yet make a conscience still of cuckold-making,
What can we say your pardon to obtain;
This matter here was prov'd against poor Jane:
She never once deny'd it, but in short,
Whimper'd—and—cry'd—sweet sir, I'm sorry for't.
'Twas well he met a kind, good-natur'd soul;
We are not *all* so easy to controul.
I fancy one might find in this good town
Some wou'd ha' told the gentleman his own;
Have answer'd smart—*to what do you pretend,*
Blockhead—as if I mustn't see a friend:
Tell me of hackney-coaches—jaunts to th' city—
Where shou'd I buy my china?—faith, I'll fit ye—
Our wife was of a milder, meeker spirit;
You!—lords and masters!—was not *that* some merit?
Well, peace be with her, she did wrong most surely;
But so do many more that look demurely.
Nor shou'd our mourning madam weep alone,
There are more ways of wickedness than one.
If the reforming stage shou'd fall to shaming,
Ill-nature, pride, hypocrisy, and gaming;

The poets frequently might move compassion,
And with *She Tragedies* o'er run the nation.
Then judge the *fair offender* with good nature,
And let your fellow-feeling curb your satire.
What if our neighbours have some little failing,
Must we needs fall to damning and to railing?
For her excuse too, be it understood,
That if the woman was not quite so good,
Her lover was a king, she flesh and blood.
And since she's dearly paid the sinful score,
Be kind at last, and pity poor Jane Shore.

Some particulars having been communicated to me, relating to Miss Oldfield's coming upon the stage, by Mr. Taylor, formerly a servant to Mr. Rich, I could wish they had been sooner transmitted; but as the intentions of the writer must be acknowledged an act of friendship, I hope the contents of his letter will be agreeable to the public, for whose use it is inserted.

To Mr. Curll, &c.

Sir,

"In your memoirs of Miss Oldfield it may not be amiss to insert the following facts, the truth of which you may depend. Her father, Capt. Oldfield, not only run out all the military, but likewise the paternal bounds of his fortune, having a pretty estate in houses in Pall-Mall. It was wholly owing to Capt. Farquhar, that ever Miss Oldfield became an actress, from the following incident. Dining one day at her aunt's, who kept the Mitred Tavern in St. James's Market, he heard Miss Nanny reading a play behind the bar with so proper an emphasis, and such

agreeable turns suitable to each character, that he swore the girl was cut out for the stage; to which she had before always expressed an inclination, being very desirous to try her fortune that way. Her mother, the next time she saw Capt. Vanbrugh, who had a great respect for the family, told him what was Capt. Farquhar's advice; upon which he desired to know whether, in the plays she read, her fancy was most pleased with tragedy or comedy. Miss being called in, said, comedy; she having at that time gone through all Beaumont and Fletcher's comedies; and the play she was reading when captain Farquhar dined there, was, the *Scornful Lady*. Captain Vanbrugh shortly recommended her to Mr. Christopher Rich, who took her in the house, at the allowance but of fifteen shillings per week. However, her agreeable figure, and the sweetness of her voice, soon gave her the preference, in the opinion of the whole town, to all our young actresses; and his Grace the late Duke of Bedford, being pleased to speak to Mr. Rich in her favor, he instantly raised her allowance to twenty shillings per week. Her fame and salary, at length, rose to her just merit.

Your humble servant,

CHARLES TAYLOR.

Nov. 25, 1730.

Having already mentioned Miss Campion's good fortune, in being honored with the friendship of the Duke of Devonshire, I am here to observe, that a very short time put a period to her happiness.

Paying some visits, last summer, to my friends in

Buckinghamshire, as the monuments of the dead never escape my notice, in Latimer's church in that county, I found Miss Campion was buried. She was taken off in her bloom, by a hectic-fever, under which she languished four months, being but nineteen years of age. Her endowments, both of mind and body, are very elegantly delineated in the following inscription, upon a very neat marble tablature, erected to her memory in the church abovementioned, by his Grace William Duke of Devonshire.

Requiescit Hic
Pars mortalis Mariæ Annæ Campion.
Obiit 19 Maij. Anno M.DCC.VI. Ætat. 19.
Quod superest ex altera parte quære.
Formam Egregiam et miris illecebras ornatam.
Virtutes Animi superarunt.
Plebeium genus (sed honestum)
Nobilitate morum decoravit,
Supra ætatem Sagax,
Supra Sortem (præsertim egenis) benigna.
Inter scenicos ludos (in quibus aliquandiu versata est)
Verecunda et intemerata:
Post quatuor mensium languorem
(a Febri Hectica correptum)
Intempestivam mortem
Forti pectore et Christiana Pietate subivit,
Humanitate præditis
(Si quid mentem mortalia tangunt)
Flebilis;
Amicis heu flebilior!
Dilectissimis Reliquiis Sacrum,

Lapidem hunc poni curavit
*G. D. D.

The foregoing inscription has been thus attempted in English.

MARY ANNE CAMPION,
Died on the 19th day of May, 1706,
in the 19th year of her age.

Resting in peace, her mortal part here lies;
But, her immortal soul assumes the skies.
Her lovely form with ev'ry grace conjoin'd,
Illustrated the virtues of her mind.
Though meanly born, her morals were sincere,
And such, as the most noble blood might wear.
Her wisdom far above her years did show;
Above her fortune did her bounty flow.
Some years the stage her sprightly action grac'd,
Most others, in her conduct, she surpass'd.
Four months a ling'ring fever's wasting pains
Her breast with christian fortitude sustains.
Her immature decease soft hearts bewail,
Relentless grief her loving friends assail.
Sacred to her most dear remains, be't known,
His Grace of Devon consecrates this stone.

The Gentleman who favoured me with the translation of Miss Campion's inscription, assures me, that in the blank leaf of her Common Prayer Book, given her by the Duke of Devonshire, were written the following twelve remarkable verses, from Mr. Dryden's Conquest of Granada; which it seems his Grace recommended to her as a plan of natural religion, and of his own belief in such matters.

* Guliemus Devoniæ Dux.

By *reason* man a *Godhead* may discern;
But *how* he should be *worshipp'd* cannot learn.
O Heav'n how dark a riddle's thy decree,
Which bounds our wills, but seems to leave 'em free?
Since thy fore-knowledge cannot be in vain,
Our choice must be what thou didst first ordain.
Thus like a captive in an isle confin'd,
Man walks at large, a prisoner of the mind;
Wills all his crimes, while Heav'n th' indictment draws,
And pleading guilty justifies the laws.
None knows what fate is for himself design'd,
The thought of human chance should make us kind.*

His Grace of Devonshire did not long survive Miss Campion, dying in about a year after her. This amour, and the Duke's political character, drew upon Dr. White Kennet, late Bishop of Peterborough, some very severe reflections, on account of the sermon he preached at his funeral in the Church of Allhallows, in Derby, Sept. 5, 1707. I shall not load these papers with a recital of what has been said pro and con, by Pamphleteers, but content myself, and I hope the reader, in giving a short state of the case, as it is very handsomely drawn up, with regard to the memories both of the *spiritual* and *temporal* Peer, by the writer of Bishop Kennet's life.

†"A growing set of people, were disposed to dislike every thing he wrote or did; for the times were now come, when parties judged of actions and writings, not by the merit of the performances, but by

* The reader will not let the *sublime* principle which this last line inculcates, escape his reflection.

† See Bishop Kennet's Life, 8vo. 1730, p. 35, and seq.

the affection or prejudice they bore to the name of the authors of them. He was now stamped for a Whig writer; which was as bad as the being a Republican, and a Presbyterian; and that was worse, than the being a Papist. Many of our best Prelates and Divines have suffered under the same prejudices of malice and ignorance. When their political writings have offended, then the party run down all their other performances whatsoever. When once angry, they catch at new causes, and fresher pretences of being more angry; like children, and other people of no command upon themselves, they are scratching of a *new* wound, because of an itching in the *old* sore."

It was under this disadvantage that Dr. Kennet was called to preach a funeral sermon for the Duke of Devonshire, from which he excused himself, as a stranger to that noble family, and till then utterly unknown to them. But it appeared that a Reverend Prelate had recommended him to that duty, and had undertaken to give him such instructions, as might enable him to speak with truth and proper observations of that great man. Upon this encouragement, he complied with the importunate request, and upon a short warning, amidst the necessity of asking many questions, and making many visits, he drew up a serious sermon, and attended the very solemn funeral to Derby, delivering the sermon before a very full audience of the neighbouring gentry, who could best judge of the character given of that noble Peer; and in the same evening, one of them at the table, in the name of the rest, thanked the preacher, and told him

that they, in that county, had been witnesses of the truth of the most material things he had so well spoken of the late Duke. And it was by their report, and the concurrent testimony of that part of the family that attended those obsequies, that his late Grace the Duke of Devonshire, a Peer of great prudence and probity, generously approved of that last office, and desired the Doctor to publish the sermon; to which he submitted with the less fear of offence, because all he said relating to his life was either suggested or allowed by the then Bishop of Sarum, who was intimately acquainted with his Grace's conduct; and all that he observed concerning his sickness and death, was communicated to him by the eye witness and faithful judge of them, the then Lord Bishop of Ely. Upon their authority, and approbation, the Doctor published his sermon, and confirmed the main subject of it, by casting in some historical collections relating to the descent and progress of that noble family; to which he made a modest Dedication to the late Duke; which he (who would have despised flattery, and abhorred falsehood) was so well pleased with, that he had a respect and favour for the Doctor, and showed it in a very kind manner, by recommending him to the Queen for the Deanery of Peterborough, soon after vacant by the death of Dr. Freeman, which we may suppose was the more easily obtained of her Majesty, as being her Chaplain in ordinary, by the recommendation of the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Earl of Godolphin. This preferment, though not so much to be envied, raised the fiercer spite and malice of the party against

him. Libels and peevish sermons pointed at him. They got young men to tune the Oxford Pulpit, and let out their University Press to the Printing, or reprinting a sorry libel* of poor John Dunton's, against the deceased Duke and his funeral preacher. Some said that he had *covered all the vices* of that great man, which was so far from being true, that he plainly intimated them. "That this was the true bottom of all the clamour against Dean Kennet, both then and afterwards, is evident from the many violent pamphlets and libels published against him." And, it is merely to show the inveteracy of prejudice on *all* occasions, and of party malice in *some*, that the reader has been troubled with this digression; but, with candid minds it will have its due weight and use. For as to the Dean's palliating all the Duke's vices, thereby insinuating, that he was privy to his Grace's amour with Miss Campion, and also that he was the author of her monumental inscription; "These calumnies he was so little concerned in, that he has often said, he had never before heard of them." The intrigue he was wholly a stranger to, and as to the inscription, it is well known to be the performance of his Grace's own elegant pen.

Mrs. Manley tells us, in her life, that the Duchess of Cleveland's favourite, and the only man she loved, was Mr. Goodman the player; though she had the power of captivating Princes. And though as Sir Samuel Garth sings,† the stage is a spot,

* The Hazard of a Death-Bed Repentance.

† See Dispensary, a Poem.

Where purple Emperors in buskins tread,
And rule imaginary worlds for bread.

Yet, many are the instances of *real* monarchs, and persons of the *first* distinction, who have felt the power of beauty from the stage, and fallen willing victims to a theatrical Venus.

Among the other dramatical memoirs, herein recited, Mr. Wycherley having been mentioned on account of his most excellent writings; I think myself, in justice to *his* memory (as well as to the gentleman* who married his widow) to set the affair of his marrying, *just at the eve of his death*, as Major Pack well expresses it, in a true light.

It must be acknowledged that poor Mr. Wycherley was *incapable*, as he told the lady, of rendering her *due benevolence;* but he was very unwilling to be rendered *incapable* of paying his debts, through his nephew's ungenerous treatment of him, when he knew what was in his power; so that it must embalm his memory, with the greatest *honor*, when it is known, that *justice* was the only motive of his changing his condition.

We shall conclude this article with some circumstances of the last act of Mr. Wycherley's life, as related by Mr. Pope.† "He had often told me, as I doubt not he did all his acquaintance, that he would marry as soon as his life was despaired of. Accordly, a few days before his death he underwent the ceremony; and joined together those two sacraments,

* Capt. Shrimpton.

† See a letter to Mr. Blount of Jan. 21, 1715—16.

which wise men say, should be the last we receive; for if you observe, matrimony is placed after extreme unction in our catechism, as a kind of hint of the order of time in which they ought to be taken. The old man then lay down, satisfied in the conscience of having by this one act paid his just debts, obliged a woman who, he was told, had merit, and shewn an heroic resentment of the ill usage of his next heir. Some hundred pounds which he had with the lady, discharged those debts; a jointure of 400*l.* a year made her a recompence; and his nephew he left to comfort himself as well as he could, with the miserable remains of a mortgaged estate. I saw our friend twice after this was done, less pevish in his sickness than he used to be in his health; neither much *afraid* of dying, nor (which in him had been more likely) much *ashamed* of marrying. The evening before he *expired,* he called his young wife to his bed side, and earnestly entreated her not to deny him one request, the last he should make. Upon her assurance of consenting to it, he told her, *my dear it is only this, that you will never marry an old man again.* I cannot help remarking, that *sickness,* which often destroys both *wit* and *wisdom,* yet seldom has power to remove that talent which we call *humor*; Mr. Wycherley shewed *his* even in this *last compliment;* though I think his request a little hard, for *why should he bar her from doubling her jointure on the same easy terms?*" But Mr. Pope should have observed, that the lady doubled her fortune much better, by marrying a young gentleman whose commission was more than equivalent to her jointure.

The case of Mr. Shrimpton, Mr. Wycherly's Executor, and the unjust litigous usage he met with is, I think, a sufficient memento for all persons whatever, who have any effects to leave behind them, how prudently circumspect they ought to be in settling their affairs before their decease. Though notwithstanding all the care and caution imaginable, where there is a fellow, who wears a Corinthian forehead, such a one as Captain Shrimpton had to do with, a man of honor will find it very difficult to get out of his clutches. Mr. Otway, in his tragedy of *Venice Preserved* has described the misery of a man, whose effects are in the hands of the law, with great spirit. The bitterness of being the scorn and laughter of base minds, the anguish of being insulted by men hardened beyond the sense of shame or pity, and the injury of a man's fortune being wasted, under pretence of justice, are excellently aggravated in the following speech of Pierre to Jaffeir.

I pass'd this very moment by *thy* doors,
And found them guarded by a troop of villains;
The sons of public rapine were destroying.
They told me by the sentence of the law,
They had commission to seize all thy fortune.
Here, stood a Ruffian with a horrid face,
Lording it o'er a pile of massy plate,
Tumbled into a heap for public sale.
There, was another, making villainous jests
At thy undoing; he had ta'en possession
Of all thy ancient most domestic ornaments;
Rich hangings, intermix'd and wrought with gold;
The very bed, which on thy wedding night
Received thee to the arms of Belvidera!

The scene of all thy joys, was violated
By the coarse hands of filthy dungeon villains
And thrown amongst the common lumber.

I shall put an end to this last complaint, by acquainting the reader, that the Lord Chancellor Macclesfield was pleased to make a decree in favour of Captain Shrimpton.

We now come to the last original part of Miss Oldfield. James Thompson, an ingenious Scotch gentleman, (author of the Seasons) in the Preface to his Tragedy of *Sophonisba*, thus delivers himself: "I cannot conclude without owning my obligations to those concerned in the representation. They have indeed done me more than justice. Whatever was designed as amiable and engaging in Massinissa, shines out in Mr. Wilks's action. Miss Oldfield, in the character of Sophonisba, has excelled what, even in the fondness of an author, I could either wish or imagine. The grace, dignity, and happy variety of her action, have been universally applauded, and are truly admirable."

Sophonisba was the last original character in which she appeared on the stage. But, the last time of her performance was on Tuesday, the 28th day of April, 1730, when Sir John Vanbrugh's excellent Comedy, *The Provoked Wife*, was acted for the benefit of Mr. Charke, wherein she acted the part of Lady Brute.

Upon the very approach of her last illness, she most earnestly requested her Physicians not to flatter her, but to give her their opinions freely, *what they*

thought of her case. And when they told her, *they feared the fatality of it,* she replied, without the least shock or emotion, she *acquiesced in the lot Providence had assigned her; and hoped she should bear her afflictions patiently.*

Having this previous notice of her change, she set her house in order, and made such an equitable distribution of her estate, as is in every respect highly commendable.

Miss Oldfield was at length released from her earthly bonds, expiring very early on Friday morning, October 23, 1730.

The following Epitaph is supposed to come from the hand of a certain gentleman well known at Westminster:

Hic Jacet (*cito jacet hic*) Oldfield,
The brightest actress Britain e'er did yield.
In parts diverting her chief talent lay,
Wherein a thousand charms she did display.
Would every one in this degen'rate age,
Whilst acting here a part on life's short stage,
Like her exert, pursuing *nature's laws*,
They'd meet at their last *Exit* like applause.

As to the variety of Miss Oldfield's amours, "such infamous reports arise, from her being more lovely than the rest of her sex, she was envied by such malicious wretches; but all who knew her will confirm this truth, that, she was never guilty of any base or ungenerous action."

Such is the character I have had communicated to me by a gentlewoman whose veracity is unquestiona-

ble; and whom, I am not ashamed to own, I have with great satisfaction consulted upon the present occasion. She thus farther proceeds.

"Miss Oldfield, like a prudent and just parent, has equitably divided her estate between her two sons, and only children Maynwaring and Churchill; for was I brought on my oath, I would swear she had no other; and as to *love affairs*, I do assure you, I know of none, but with the fathers of the gentlemen here mentioned. As to the cause of her death, it cannot fall within the bounds of censure; for the surgeons when she was opened, made no other report, than what had been reported by the physicians; and it was a malady known by every body to be incident to our sex, although we were vestals. These are all the particulars I can relate either of Miss Oldfield's public or private behavior. I have thrown in my mite toward her vindication, though the occasion for it gives me a great deal of uneasiness; but they who cannot serve a friend without a view of interest, ought to be despised."*

* A sentiment worth dwelling on.

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